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ABSTRACT

This issue contains an editorial, "Empowering Women through Education" (Elizabeth Cruzada), and eight articles. "Women and Education" (Swarna Jayaweera) presents the status of women and girls' education in Asia vis-a-vis the goals set in the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies. "Education Reforms and Development of Chinese Minority Women" (Zhen Yushun) describes the present situation, the existing problems, and the current reforms. "Strengthen Adult Education to Promote Women's Development" (Jia Xiuzon) discusses the measures the Chinese government has taken to develop women's adult education. "Women and Education in Guangdong Province" (Zhang Yi Ni) introduces the efforts of the Guangdong Provincial Federation of Women and the difficulties being faced by Guangdong women in education. "Women's Literacy and Empowerment" (Anita Dighe) shows literacy's role in raising the consciousness of village women who spearheaded an anti-arrack (liquor) agitation. "Nonformal Education and Women's Empowerment: Perspective on South Pacific Praxis" (Adele Jones) discusses findings of a project that examined the extent to which nonformal education programs for women in the Caribbean and South Pacific contributed to their empowerment. "Education Work among Urban Poor Women" (Perla Bunda) describes the development of a national federation of urban poor women's organizations in the Philippines. "Popular Education for Women's Empowerment" (Judy Taguiwalo, Carol Anonuevo) describes the historical background, Filipino educational program, and problems and constraints. (YLB)

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Table of Contents

1. Editorial 2

2. **Women and Education - Constraints and Challenges**
   Swarna Jayaweera 3

3. **Education Reforms and Development of Chinese Minority Women**
   Zhen Yushun 14

4. **Strengthen Adult Education to Promote Women's Development**
   Jia Xiuzon 18

5. **Women and Education in Guangdong Province**
   Zhang Yi Ni 23

6. **Women's Literacy and Empowerment:** The Nellore Experience
   Anita Dighe 25

7. **Non-Formal Education and Women's Empowerment: Perspective on South Pacific Praxis**
   Adele Jones 32

8. **Education Work Among Urban Poor Women**
   Perla Bunda 37

9. **Popular Education for Women's Empowerment**
   Judy Taguiwalo & Carol Anonuevo 42

Editorial

Empowering women through education

Five years before the much-targetted year 2000, women worldwide continue to live in poverty, exploitation, discrimination, violence and oppression. The innovations of the last decade - globalization, structural adjustment policies, international debt, militarism - have left more women marginalized, as economic and political imbalances among and within countries became deeper and graver.

Education, identified in Nairobi as the basic tool for women's advancement and the promotion of their status, has changed little in terms of impact. Formal education continues to reinforce gender stereotypes, tends to exclude women and girls from decision-making and inhibits them from making affirmative actions that will allow them to take control of their lives. Reforms in education geared towards women's development have been negated by the over-all readjustment of education structures to conform with economic liberalization policies and gear populations towards competing in the world market. Educational systems have responded more to preparing women for multinational corporations, to doing piece-rate work, or even to become servants in foreign lands.

It is the women's organizations and NGOs who have taken on the task of transforming women's consciousness and awakening them to their potentials, for themselves and their societies. Women are being educated, mostly by other women, to empower themselves to analyze their contexts, to organize and mobilize for social change, and to develop autonomy in decision making, and their over-all capacity for full participation in all fields. These efforts, however, seldom go beyond the short-term and/or the local level.

In this issue of the ASPBAE Courier, the status of women and girls' education in Asia is presented in a report by Swarna Jayaweera, vis-a-vis the goals set in the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies. Women from different countries also discuss their experiences in trying to make education - formal, non-formal, and popular - work for women, their needs for education and problems. With this issue, we hope to contribute to the efforts of constantly re-examining our present education systems, policies, and curricula and evaluate them not only for gender-sensitivity or gender-responsiveness, but whether they enable women to meet both their practical needs and strategic interests - defined by them, and according to their social and economic contexts.

ELIZABETH CRUZADA
Guest Editor

Women and Education- Constraints and Challenges

The context

The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies underscored education as "the basis for the full promotion and improvement of the status of women" and as "the basic tool that should be given to women in order to fulfill their role as full members of society" (NFLS, para 163, 1985). Over the years, education in Asia has functioned as an agent of socio-economic mobility as well as an instrument for socialization and social control. During the last five decades, governments in developing countries in Asia have recognized the right of citizens to education in their Constitutions and have often attempted to use education to reduce socio-economic inequalities and to accelerate national development. Nevertheless, the task of empowering women through this multi-faceted process of education continues to present a challenge to policy makers, administrators, non-governmental organizations, educators and the community.

A paper presented by SWARNA JAYAWEERA to the Asian and Pacific Symposium of Non-Governmental Organizations in Women and Development, November 1993, Manila, Philippines. Ms Jayaweera is coordinator of the Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR), based in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The Forward Looking strategies focused on six areas of intervention:

(i) eliminating illiteracy by the year 2000,

(ii) ensuring women equal opportunity to acquire a holistic education at all levels,

(iii) revising and developing curricula to eliminate gender-based differentiation and stereotyping in activities and materials and promoting self-confidence among girls and women,

(iv) diversifying vocational training opportunities to assist women to develop their aptitudes and to improve their employment prospects,

(v) providing continuing or adult education programmes for women, and

(vi) promoting the participation of women in formulating and implementing educational plans and programs.

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women stipulates the enforcement of almost the same measures in order to ensure to women equal rights with men in the field of education (Art. 10, CEDAW, 1981). However, countries that ratified the Convention have yet to conform to its standards.

Since Nairobi, strong pressures at international and regional levels have made the recognition of the right of the child to education on the basis of equal opportunity a focal point of national policies. Eighteen of 22 'economic developing' countries in Asia have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and 12 of these countries have formulated national plans of action to achieve its year 2000 goals.

The Convention seeks to establish legal standards for the protection and development of children and spells out a comprehensive agenda for the education of the child. The World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children accepted at the World Summit for Children in New York, 1990 enunciated the same goals. Its World Plan of Action sponsored by UNICEF encompassed targets for the year 2000 of universal access to basic education, 80% retention at the end of primary education and reduction in gender disparities; reduction in adult illiteracy by half; and programmes for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values for a better quality of life, preparation for employment through vocational training, and special measures for children in 'specially difficult circumstances'. (UNICEF, 1991).

Efforts have been made to translate into action in the Region the UN World Declaration on Education for All accepted at Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, through the Asia-Pacific programme of Education for All (APPEAL) under the auspices of the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok. This programme has three components initiated in 1987/88 - action for Elimination of Illiteracy, Universalizing Primary Education, and Continuing Education. The South Asian countries which have among them, the countries in which girls are the most educationally disadvantaged, have taken their own policy initiatives. SAARC Conferences and Summits on Children since 1986 have focused on education for girls, and 1990 was declared the SAARC Year of the Girl Child and 1991-2000, the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child. At the most recent Summit in1992, goals were set for 1995 - at least 75% primary education enrolment and 50% retention and reduction in adult illiteracy by 25% (UNICEF, 1992). Individual countries in Asia have formulated national policies and Plans of Action to achieve universal basic education and national policies, Plans on Women and Women's Charters have underscored the importance of the education of girls and women.

The implementation of the Nairobi Strategies need to be reviewed in the context of this post-Nairobi positive policy environment for education. The need for reaffirmation of goals and 'scheduling' targets for reducing illiteracy and for increasing educational participation in the 1990s, reflects a consensus that the outcomes of efforts since 1985 have ot been commensurate with needs and

expectations. Despite CEDAW and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, few countries have introduced compulsory education legislation. The 'girl child' continues to be educationally disadvantaged in the countries in which she was disadvantaged in 1985. Ina ll countries in the Region, education has yet to be used consciously for the empowerment of girls and women.

Progress made over the last decade can be assessed in quantitative terms from educational statistics available in UNESCO. These statistics relate to 'economically developing' countries in Asia - from NIEs to low income countries. Japan has been excluded as universal literacy and primary education and near universal secondary education prevail in this industrialized country.

Illiteracy

Literacy is the minimum basic skill required for individual and national development. The largest number of illiterate persons are reported to live in Asis and around 60% of them are women. Table 1 presents the available data pertaining to male and female illiteracy rates in the 1980 and 1990. It will be seen that of the eight countries in South Asia, five - Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India - have high illiteracy rates and very high female illiteracy rates - between 75% and 95% in 1980 and 66% and 86% in 1990. Bhutan in South Asia has the same high illiteracy rates, but reliable statistics are not available. Cambodia in South East Asia too has similar illiteracy rates. Gender disparities were over 20 percentage points in 1980 and since male illiteracy rates declined more rapidly than female illiteracy rates, these gender disparities have even widened by 1990 in Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan, and have not been reduced in India. Rural illiteracy rates are even higher and district-wide disparities as, for instance between Kerala and Rajasthan in India are very wide. It is apparent that these countries are a long way from achieving the Nairobi goals of eliminating illiteracy by the year 2000. it is unlikely that even the modest SAARC targets are realized.

TABLE 1
Female literacy Rates (15+ Population)

Country	1980/1981			1990/1991		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Afghanistan	91.1	68.7	95.0	70.6	55.9	86.1
Bangladesh	70.8	60.3	82.0	64.7	52.9	78.0
Brunei	22.2	14.8	31.0	na	na	na
Cambodia	na	na	na	64.8	51.8	77.8
China	34.5	20.8	48.9	26.7	15.9	38.2
India	69.2	46.2	74.3	51.8	38.2	66.3
Indonesia	32.7	22.5	42.3	23.0	15.9	32.0
Republic of Korea	12.4	5.8	19.0	3.7	0.9	6.5
Lao PDR 1985	16.1	8.0	24.2	na	na	na
Malaysia	30.4	20.4	40.3	21.5	13.5	29.5
Maldives	9.7	8.8	9.5	5.0	5.0	5.0
Myanmar	21.4	14.2	28.3	19.4	10.9	27.7
Nepal	79.4	68.3	90.8	74.4	62.4	86.8
Pakistan	73.8	64.0	84.8	65.2	52.7	78.9
Philippines	16.7	16.1	17.2	10.3	10.0	10.5
Singapore	17.1	8.4	26.0	na	na	na
Sri Lanka	13.2	8.7	18.0	11.6	6.6	16.5
Thailand	12.0	7.7	16.0	7.0	3.9	10.1
Vietnam	16.0	9.5	21.7	12.4	8.0	16.4

Source: UNESCO Statistical Annual Year Book 1992
1 - Republic of Korea - the statistics are for 1970 and 1980
2 - Maldives - the statistics are for 1985 and 1990 and have been obtained from official reports based on the censuses.

Three countries - China, Indonesia and Malaysia - had between 40% to 50% illiteracy in 1980 and have reduced them to between 30% and 40%, although gender disparities persist. There has been no progress in Myanmar - 28% illiteracy in both years. Seven countries have less than 20% female illiteracy - the Maldives, Republic of Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Singapore (according to enrolment data). The Maldives and the Republic of Korea have the lowest female illiteracy rates - 5% and 6.5% respectively and the Maldives and the Philippines have no gender disparities. On the whole, the rate of decline has been slow in all countries and, while gender disparities are not wide, there has been no radical change in the situation.

Gender disparities in all countries are affected by high illiteracy levels among the older generation who had limited access to schooling. As the enrolment data in Table 2 indicates gender disparities among the age groups below 30 years are minimal in countries in South East Asia and in the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

It is pertinent to reflect on why there has been no radical improvement in literacy levels

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TABLE 2

Gross Enrolment Rates by Sex at the First Level of Education (Primary Level)

Country	Gross Enrolment Rates (%)						Gender Disparities (% points)	
	1980/1981			1989/1990			1980/81	1989/90
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	M-F	M-F
Afghanistan	34	54	12	24	31	16	42	15
Bangladesh	62	76	46	73	78	68	30	10
Bhutan	26	34	18	26	31	20	16	11
China	112	121	103	135	140	129	18	11
Hongkong	106	107	105	106	106	106	2	-
India	83	98	67	97	109	83	31	26
Indonesia	107	115	100	117	119	114	15	5
Dem. Rep. Korea	na	na	na	106	110	103	na	7
Rep. of Korea	110	109	111	107	106	109	-2	-3
Lao PDR	113	123	104	104	116	91	19	25
Malaysia	93	93	92	93	93	93	1	-
Mongolia	106	108	105	98	96	100	3	-4
Myanmar	91	93	89	103	106	100	4	6
Nepal	88	122	52	86	112	57	70	55
Pakistan	39	51	27	37	47	26	24	21
Philippines	113	113	113	111	111	110	-	1
Singapore	108	109	106	110	111	109	3	2
Sri Lanka	103	105	100	107	108	105	5	3
Thailand	99	100	97	85	86	85	3	1
Vietnam	109	111	106	102	105	99	5	6

Source: UNESCO Statistical Annual Year Book 1992
1 - Bhutan - the statistics are for 1984 and 1988
2 - Democratic Republic of Korea and Myanmar - the statistics are for 1987
3 - Vietnam - the statistics are for 1980 and 1985
4 - Only two countries have achieved universal primary education in age specific participation rates - Republic and Korea and Singapore

in most countries, despite the momentum provided by international and regional concern and support as in the case of UNICEF efforts and the UNESCO APPEAL programme. Literacy programmes organized by the state and NGOs have been of three types - (i) imparting basic skills in literacy and numeracy (ii) functional literacy programs as a component of development programmes, and Freire-style programmes as an integral part of a conscientization, empowermeni or transformation process.

The Mass Literacy Campaigns in China and Vietnam were successful in reducing illiteracy because they were part of a process of political socialization and mass education conducted with commitment and transformational zeal. The Mass Education Programmes in Bangladesh in the early 1980s and the Programmes of the Literacy and Mass Education Commission in Pakistan from 1981 to 1987 had to be abandoned as they were narrowly focused on imparting literacy skills and therefore could not achieve their purpose. It is not clear whether the National Literacy Mission launched in India in 1988 for adults between 15 and 35 years is moving towards its 1995 targets. Bangladesh has launched another programme of mass education in collaboration with small local organizations (METLSO) which are 'grassroots' and development-oriented but lack resources for large-scale action.

Functional literacy programmes are intended to be directed to development goals and to be therefore relevant to basic needs. They have tended, however to be compartmentalized as literacy programmes, or skills development programmes or have focused only on the reproductive and nurturing roles of women. In most countries, the State and NGOs have implemented small innovative and successful programmes which have had limited impact as they have not been replicated in larger geographical units. Some programmes are ad hoc, lack professionalism and are isolated from mainstream development programmes. The most effective have been the Thai Functional Literacy Programme and the Indonesian Kejer Paket A which were implemented on a large scale, were multi-pronged and had strong infrastructure support. With few exceptions, literacy programmes or functional literacy programmes have been skill-oriented and have not reflected socio-economic or gender issues. Relatively few programmes have attempted to conscientize women to acquire self-confidence, achieve self-reliance, and become aware of their rights and able to challenge oppressive economic structures, social practices and gender role assumptions that perpetuate their disadvantaged situation. The challenge, therefore, is to create a group of gender-sensitive women and men catalysts who will mobilize local participatory women's groups or mixed groups to achieve functional skills and knowledge, and the capacity to be able to meet their needs and aspirations in education and in life in general, effectively.

Access to education

Equality of educational opportunity implies equal access and retention, and the equitable distribution of facilities and quality

inputs. As quantitative indicators of developments in the late 1980s, only gross enrolment rates of educational participation are available (Tables 2, 3 and 4), since not all countries provide data on age-specific participation rates. These gross enrolment rates do not reflect the real situation as large numbers of overage students are included in enrolment data at different levels. Age-specific participants are often around 20 percentage points or less. They are indicative, however, of broad trends and are illustrative of gender disparities in enrolment.

The economically developing countries in Asia can be grouped into two categories with respect to access to education. The first group of countries are those with high illiteracy rates and, as Tables 2 and 3 indicate, low enrolment rates - Afghanistan, Bhutan, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and India. It will be seen that these countries have low enrolment rates, and that with exception of India and Bangladesh in primary educaiton, there has not been appreciable improvement in their enrolment rates over a decade. For instance, gross female enrolment rates at the first level have been 27% and 26% in Pakistan, both female and male enrolment rates are reported to have increased from 1980 to 1985 and declined from 1985 to 1990. Gender disparities are wide and have not declined, for instance, in Pakistan or even in India. As in the case of literacy, it is apparent that a significant percentage of girls in these countries do not have access yet to basic education. Retention rates are low, gross enrolment rates at secondary level are still less than 20% and gender disparities are wide.

Other countries in Asia have a substantial proportion of girls and boys in primary schools. Gender disparities are minimal but only two countries - the Republic of Korea and Singapore - have been able to universalize primary education. At secondary level, China, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Myanmar have between [illegible] enrolment rates) and the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Malaysia between [illegible] secondary schools. In the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia and Mongolia, female enrolment rates are higher than male enrolment rates at this level. It is secondary and higher education that permit the optimal utilization of individual potential and enable women to reach decision-making positions in the educational and administrative structure

TABLE 3

Gross Enrolment by Sex at the Second Level of Education (Secondary Level)

Country	Gross Enrolment Rates (%)						Gender Disparities (% points)	
							1980/81	1989/90
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	M-F	M-F
Afghanistan	10	16	4	8	10	7	13	3
Bangladesh	18	26	9	17	22	11	17	11
Bhutan	4	6	1	5	7	2	5	5
China	46	54	17	48	53	41	37	12
Hongkong	64	63	65	74	71	76	-2	-5
India	32	41	22	44	54	33	19	21
Indonesia	29	35	23	45	49	41	12	8
Rep. Korea	76	81	71	88	89	86	10	3
Lao PDR	21	26	16	26	31	21	9	10
Malaysia	48	50	48	56	55	58	4	-3
Mongolia	88	84	92	92	88	96	-8	-8
Myanmar	22	na	na	23	25	23	na	2
Nepal	22	33	9	30	42	17	26	25
Pakistan	14	20	8	22	29	13	12	16
Philippines	65	61	69	73	72	76	-8	-3
Singapore	58	56	59	69	68	71	-3	-3
Sri Lanka	55	53	57	74	72	77	-4	-5
Thailand	29	30	28	32	33	32	2	1
Vietnam	42	44	40	42	43	40	4	3

Source: UNESCO Statistical Annual Year Book 1992
1 - Bhutan - the statistics are for 1984 and 1988
2 - Myanmar - the statistics are for 1980 and 1987

TABLE 4

Gross Enrolment Rates by Sex at the Third Level of Education (Tertiary Level)

Country	Gross Enrolment Rates (%)						Gender Disparities (%) points	
	1980/1981			1989/1990			1980/81	1989/90
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	M-F	M-F
Bangladesh	3.0	5.1	0.9	3.3	5.4	1.2	4.2	4.2
China	1.3	2.0	0.6	1.7	2.2	1.1	1.4	1.1
Hongkong	10.2	14.2	6.4	na	na	na	na	na
Indonesia	5.7	8.0	3.1	na	na	na	na	na
Republic of Korea	15.8	23.0	8.1	40.5	52.1	27.7	14.9	24.4
Lao PDR	0.5	0.7	0.3	1.4	1.8	0.9	0.4	0.9
Malaysia	4.3	5.4	3.2	7.2	7.4	7.0	2.2	0.4
Nepal	3.0	4.9	1.1	6.5	9.9	2.8	3.8	7.1
Pakistan	2.8	3.9	1.5	2.8	3.9	1.6	2.4	2.3
Philippines	27.7	26.8	28.5	26.5	na	na	-1.7	na
Singapore	7.9	9.3	6.4	na	na	na	2.9	na
Sri Lanka	2.8	3.2	2.5	4.2	4.9	3.5	0.7	1.4
Thailand	13.1	na	na	16.1	na	na	na	na
Vietnam	2.3	3.8	1.0	na	na	na	na	na

Source: UNESCO Statistical Annual Year Book 1992
1 - Pakistan - the statistical are for 1985 1989

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in the country.

The relative access of girls to education can also be assessed by the proportion of girls of the total enrolment at each level. Less than 40% of the total enrolment were girls in Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bhutan at primary level and in the same four countries and in Bangladesh and India at the second level (*Table 5*).

From the perspectives of both human rights and gender equity, large numbers of girls in much of South Asia and girls in pockets of economically disadvantaged population in other countries are denied opportunities to develop their potential and to achieve upward mobility. Both economic constraints and socio-cultural attitudes contribute to non-participation in education. In all countries, the costs of education and its opportunity costs compel girls from poverty groups to remain out of school or 'drop out' early. The social class dimensions of educational opportunity have been observed in studies of participation in all countries. This situation has been aggravated in the 1980s by the hardships created among poverty groups by structural adjustment policies and rising costs of living. Resource constraints caused by the reduction in social sector expenditure under the same policies have prevented governments from expanding or improving facilities.

Both class and gender, however, affect girls in the six countries in which literacy and enrolment rates are low. While parents in such countries as the Philippines and Sri Lanka perceive education as an agent of socio-economic mobility and as an avenue of escape from poverty and therefore have equally high aspirations for their sons and daughters (ILO 1990; CENWOR 1987; Jayaweera 1993), low priority is given to the education of girls in most of South Asia. Son-preference in these latter countries leads to inequalities in the allocation of resources wihtin families, for education. Girls are seen in their domestic role by many parents and the community, as potential child bearers and rearers. In low income families they are economic assets, undertaking houshold chores from the early age of 6 or 7, earlier than boys, and are later assigned tasks that are per-ceived to be women's responsibility, such as collecting water, firewood and fodder, household chores, child care and farming. It has been estimated that in Nepal a young girl works as many hours as an adult male and therefore cannot find the time to go to school (Acharya and Bennett, 1980). Such attitudes are not always resistant to change and parents are often ambivalent regarding the need to educate girls. This low demand for education is further exacerbated in these countries by supply factors - the distance to schools in difficult terrain, and more importantly, the lack of girls' schools and women teachers in the neighborhood. The consequences of the denial of the right to education are seen in the incidence of child labor and child abuse such as child prostitution in all countries.

Two broad strands of policy are seen. Countries which have more girls in school have tended to rely on macro social and education policies and national systems of education for educational expansion. Countries with low enrolment have been compelled, however, to formulate special

TABLE 5
Percentage of Females in Total Enrolment

Country	First Level		Second Level		Third Level		Vocational Education	
	1980/81	1989/90	1980/81	1989/90	1980/81	1989/90	1980/81	1989/90
Afghanistan	18	33	21	33	14	14	11	na
Bangladesh	37	45	24	31	14	17	2	6
Bhutan	33	37	24	24	22	na	6	na
Brunei	48	48	51	52	45	51	15	32
China	45	46	40	42	23	33	41	44
Hongkong	48	48	51	51	26	35	32	32
India	39	41	32	36	30	na	32	30
Indonesia	46	48	40	45	22	na	27	42
Korea Dem. Rep.	na	49	na	49	na	34	na	na
Korea Rep. of	49	49	46	47	23	30	44	53
Lao PDR	45	43	38	42	31	37	28	31
Malaysia	49	49	48	51	39	47	29	25
Maldives	na	49	na	49	na	na	na	na
Mongolia	49	50	52	52	60	na	na	na
Myanmar	48	48	na	47	na	na	na	na
Nepal	28	32	20	27	22	20	na	na
Pakistan	33	34	26	29	27	28	17	19
Philippines	49	49	53	50	53	na	na	na
Singapore	48	47	51	50	39	42	33	na
Sri Lanka	48	48	51	51	43	42	33	na
Thailand	48	49	46	49	40	na	33	43
Vietnam	47	48	47	47	24	na	35	na

Source: UNESCO Statistical Annual Year Book

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gender-specific strategies to bring girls within the ambit of the education system. Most economically developing countries offer incentives to offset the costs of education, such as free education, scholarships, free textbooks, school meals, uniforms, and subsidized transport. Complementary structures have been developed, particularly in low income countries, to extend educational opportunities to out-of-school children. The spare time schools at all levels of the education system in China and the complementary schools in Vietnam were relatively successful mechanisms created to extend educational opportunities in a context of high motivation and involvement. Mosque schools in Pakistan were more effective than the *Moholla* schools for girls, but the former have had only 20% girls, hence gender disparities could hardly be expected to be reduced. Feeder schools in Bangladesh, non-formal education programmes in India, especially the special centers for out-of-school girls, the literacy centers (Cheli Beti Programme) in Nepal, distance education including the programmes of the Open University in Pakistan, and the recent Community Schools that began with extensions of classroom programmes in Bhutan were all developed to increase enrolment, particularly at first level.

It is not clear how successful these programmes have been, proportionate to the magnitude of the problem and the investment in them as in the case of the non-formal education programme in India expanded in the late 1980s under the National Policy for Education (1986). Non-formal education programmes were also implemented through the State infrastructure in Thailand and Indonesia - complementary formal structures. NGOs have been involved in promoting non-formal education programmes, as for instance, by BRAC in Bangladesh and the *Mahaila Samakhanya* project in India. NGOs were particularly active in promoting the access to education of specially disadvantaged groups of children such as streetchildren, working children, child prostitues such as in the Philippines and India. However, there has been a lacuna in low enrolment countries in large scale mobilization of the community and in adequately conscientizing the parents and the community to educate their girls and women.

Non-formal education programmes, however successful, tend to have a 'second class' status in public perceptions, unless they are structured as a 'bridge' to the formal education system or to further education opportunities. Macro policies have been more clearly effective than special or ad hoc programmes in extending educational opportunity, as the experience of most countries indicates. Non-formal education and NGO activities are critical in complementing the State's policies and programmes, but they can never be regarded as a substitute for national policies. It is unequivocally the responsibility of the State to ensure the right of every girl and boy, woman and man, to education, to provide adequate incentives, facilities and support and to seek the cooperation of non-governmental agencies in achieving goals. It is regrettable also that the large state- managed education projects assisted by loans or grants of international and regional finance institutions have shown so little concern for reducing gender inequalities in educational opportunity through their interventions.

Education and Socialization

While access to education determines the distribution of benefits, the outcomes of education are influenced largely by the context of education and the social climate of the educational institutions. Education distributes knowledge and skills and legitimates performance through its credentials. In this process the school operates also as an agent of socialization and social control, conditioning the learning of gender identity and role behaviour.

In all countries, gender role assumptions are reflected in curriculum diversification, particularly in practical and vocational skills related courses. Girls are channelled to home science courses and boys to woodwork and metalwork and other technical courses, irrespective of their aptitudes. Perceptions of suitable subjects for girls and boys are associated with the gender division in the labor market. Consequently, the aspirations of girls

tend to be directed to specific areas of study, and their options are limited by their self perceptions as illustrated by their underrepresentation in engineering and other technology-related courses in higher education institutions, except in the Republic of Korea and Singapore.

Studies in many countries have shown that the school tends to reinforce the norms and gender role stereotypes imposed from the stage of child rearing practices in the family. Educational materials, including textbooks and visual materials reflect negative or stereotyped roles of girls and women (Bisaria, 1985); (Jayasena, 1991) although investigations into abilities have found more differences within a sex than between sexes and girls entering the school system have the same competencies as boys (Abhayadeva 1991). Behavioural expectations of passivity and obedience of girls are reported in schools even in countries in which girls are encouraged to have high educational and career aspirations (Jayaweera, 1993). The consequences tend to be the erosion of self-confidence, distorted self-perceptions of roles, abilities and interests and diminished life chances. It is significant that oppressive social practices that negate the individual worth of a woman, such as the dowry system, virginity tests and female infanticide to get rid of the unwanted girl child are not strongly challenged, although 35% to 45% of those enrolled in universities are women in many countries.

While this situation has been documented widely in the Region, few concrete measures have been taken to counter the negative outcomes of gendered socialization. If the education process has socialized its products in this manner, it is also possible for it to promote gender equality through curriculum materials that depict the equitable sharing of tasks and responsibilities between girls and boys and men and women, to create awareness of human rights and principles of social and gender equity among students from the primary stage, to promote self-confidence and self-esteem in girls and to develop their capacity to reject and counter oppressive structures and negative norms and attitudes. The role of women's studies is critical in this task, but such programmes are still limited to a small number of institutions.

Vocational Education

Vocational education is the intermediate agency between general education and the labour market. East and South East Asian countries offer relatively more facilities for vocational training and over 40% of the enrolment in these programmes are women. In South Asia, the percentage of women students or trainees range from 5% in Bangladesh, 17% in Nepal, 19% in Pakistan and 30% to 35% in India and Sri Lanka (UNESCO, 1990). Gender imbalances are wide in enrolment within these programmes with (i) a concentration of women in teacher education, nursing, library sciences, social work, accountancy, clerical-related work and home economics rather than agriculture, and (ii) low representation in technical and managerial courses. Diversification of training opportunities for women has long been a goal of ILO and concerned NGOs, but little has been achieved in view of stereotyped perceptions of gender-appropriate jobs and prejudices of employers and trainers. A major obstacle appears to be the communication gap between schools, training institutes and employment establishments, as seen in the lack of a comprehensive vocational information and counselling service in schools or training institutions. It is unlikely too that attitudes will change without a frontal gender sensitization programme for those in the power structure in training and employment.

Continuing Education

Post-school and out-of-school learning opportunities for women have been given priority in the APPEAL continuing education programmes that meet the needs of both girls and women in economically, socially and educationally disadvantaged groups. It also encompasses part-time higher education and courses in institutions such as Open Universities, skill development programmes and programmes that promote personal

development. There is a lack of conceptual clarity in defining 'open learning systems' and community based action programmes and often a top-down non-participatory approach resulting from the lack of needs-based planning of such programmes. The outreach of these programmes is limited when they are ad hoc, isolated from mainstream programmes and, therefore, lack the support of the State infrastructure at community level in implementation. Gender issues have received low priority even in most WID training and 'income generating' projects. Hence their potential as a base for empowering women has been largely untapped.

Participation in Programme Planning and Implementation

Women have yet to be integrated into the planning structures of many countries on a scale that would enable them to influence decision-making. It is significant that this situation is also reflected in the educational structure despite their visibility as teachers in institutions at all levels. In countries with low enrolment, the vicious circle of inadequate numbers of women teachers (10% to 30%) has been perceived to be a barrier to increasing the educational participation of girls. In at least half the countries in the Region, however, women constitute more than 50% of the teaching force (Table 6). It has been noted that even in these countries school administration is the preserve of men teachers and women are confined to largely supporting and servicing roles. Representation is even more limited in higher education institutions and in the echelons of the district and central educational administrative and planning services.

The visibility of a minority of women in seats of power has tended to overshadow the situation of the majority of women in the service. It appears that the solution lies in equipping more women with self-confidence and skills to make inroads into these positions and in organizing advocacy programmes to change perceptions at the highest political and policy levels.

NGO Participation

NGOs in Asia have participated actively in promoting the access of women to skills that will improve their situation and enhance their contribution to development. They have organized (i) literacy and functional literacy programmes (ii) complementary non-formal education programmes to extend educational opportunties (iii) training packages to increase their productivity and incomes and (iv) continuing education programmes. With the exception of the All Pakistan Women's Association which ran schools, they have not had the capacity to intervene directly in the formal education system. Nor have they had the resources to mount large and long-term vocational education programmes.

They have functioned largely in the non-formal education sector and only a few large NGOs such as BRAC in Bangladesh and Mahila Samakhanya in India have been able to organize extensive networks of centres. They have confined themselves chiefly to small scale programmes which are too numerous to enumerate and too diverse to encapsulate in a review. Their weakness is that ad hocism often prevails in a context of limited financial and human resource and absence of a macro strategy. Their strength lies in their commitment, and in the rich diversity of their innvoative 'pilot' programmes. It is NGOs who have largely incorporated gender issues and gender sensitization and social mobilization methodologies in their programmes. It is regrettable that the best of their programmes have not been replicated in a larger scale by NGOs or by State agencies who have the infrastructure to do so.

Outcomes of Education

It has been seen from the quantitative data that was presented that the benefits of educational expansion have not been distributed equitably in terms of access in some countries and in employment- related skills acquisition in virtually all countries. The consequences for women in their multiple roles and in their own lives can be examined in three

facets of their experiences - in changes in their quality of life in the family enviroment, in their economic roles and in their empowerment.

The access of women to education has clearly improved the quality of life of their families. Thre is consensus so that there is a correlation between the literacy and educational status of women and their extensive use of health and family planning services, banks and development inputs and consequently (i) the improved health status of the family and of the nation's health indicators. (ii) increase in the age of marriage and declining family size, and (iii) rise in economic productivity and family incomes or savings. There appears also to be a positive relationship between the educational level of the mothers and the educational participation and performance of their children. As women in low income families are largely responsible for family survival and maintenance, any educational inputs will assist women to improve living standards.

Higher education has brought into the labour force women who have contributed significantly to the professions, chiefly education and health. The rapid increase in labour force participation in most countries in recent decades, however, has been the result of economic pressures and improved educational levels. In countries with expanded education systems, rising educational levels, and poor absorptive capacity of the economy and consequent high incidence of unemployment, such as Sri Lanka and the Philippines, there is no linear correlation between female education and employment and the unemployment rates of women have been at least double those of men in the last two decades in Sri Lanka (Alailima, 1993; ILO, 1990). In the case of women in all countries, both supply and demand have been affected by gender role assumptions that underpin the division of labour. Women leave schools and vocational and higher education institutes with a narrower range of skills than men. The social perception that women are housewives and not income earners, and the demand in the international and local labour market for low cost female labour have channelled women to unpaid family labour and casual and marginal economic activities despite their secondary level educational qualifications. The occupational segregation in the labour market makes access to non-traditional training and employment difficult.

Education has not been an agent of upward socio-economic mobility for these women who have not had access to remunerative employment. However, access to employment at any level has resulted in more equitable gender relations in the family if economic participation has led to economic independence and control of income. On the other hand, access to knowledge and skills have not necessarily empowered women as the overt and 'hidden' curriculum have tended to promote conformity to unwholesome social practices and to reinforce gender role stereotypes and inequalities.

Challenges and future directions

This overview of recent trends in the education of girls and women has indicated that there has been by and large little significant quantitative or qualitative improvement in access to education and little tangible contribution by education to enhancing the capacity of women to function as equal partners in the family, economy and society. The State needs to take cognizance of these developments and the challenge to NGOs is to facilitate more positive changes in the 1990s. NGOs need to strengthen the capacity of girls and women through access to knowledge and skills and through developing self confidence and positive self perceptions. Two broad mechanisms are available to them - advocacy and direct intervention.

In consonance with the legal standards established by CEDAW and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the State has to ensure to every child the right to education, to a free and compulsory basic education, and the right to protection from exploitation and abuse. It has to ensure also that women have equal rights with men to education at all levels and to vocational information and skills. In

this context, NGOs must lobby with policy makers to introduce and enforce legislation relating to compulsory education and to the prohibition of marriage and employment before 16 years of age.

In view of the pressures exerted by international finance institutions to reduce educational expenditure and to take measures that are likely to erode the gains achieved over decades and to stultify progress even further NGOs need to lobby strongly to preserve the gains made, expand educational opportunities and increase the allocation of resources for education to the proportion recommended by international agencies - 4.5% of the GNP and 20% of the State educational expenditure. The State should be urged to move rapidly to achieve an equitable distribution of educational facilities at all levels, to revise national curricula in schools and Teachers' Colleges to promote the empowerment of women and to expand and diversify vocational training programmes to meet broad employment needs.

NGOs and women's research centres and groups should develop and implement gender sensitization programmes for policy makers, administrators, educators, trainers, employers and parents. Such programmes should ensure awareness of the abilities, needs and aspirations of girls and women, and the invalidity of the myths and gender roles stereotypes that obfuscate their perceptions. They need further to assist in the preparation of curriculum and other educational materials that can be fed into the national curriculum to change existing perepetions of gender roles and the gender division of labour within and outside the home, to promote concepts of sharing equitably responsibilities and tasks and to increase the self-confidence of girls and make them aware of socio-economic and gender issues that impinge on their lives. NGO centers can engage in research and women's studies programmes, alone or in collaboration with Universities and research institutions.

Many areas for future intervention have been identified in this overview and other studies. The State in collaboration with NGOs or when such collaboration is not forthcoming, NGOs on their own initiative need to expand or develop programmes to meet the educational needs of girls and women. These areas include:

(i) early childhoodd education, particularly to facilitate growth and development and to counter the negative impact of stereotyped child rearing practices,

(ii) flexible structures to extend educational opportunities to out-of-school girls, particularly for groups that receive low priority in national programmes such as those disabled, those who live in the streets, victims of child abuse and those displaced and affected by war and civil conflict,

(iii) training programmes in non-traditional vocational skills for women according to their educational base and needs as women are not a homogeneous group,

(iv) literacy and functional literacy skills that are integrated in programmes that conscientize women on gender and socio-economic issues,

(v) community basedd programmes that include gender awareness, legal literacy, group mobilization and other components that will enable women to assume control of the resources they generate and their options in family life, vocations and social relations.

Educational reviews have rarely explored gender dimensions of policies and change. The State and NGOs need to develop monitoring mechanisms that will assist in the continuing task of evaluating developments in education from the perspectives of gender equality and human rights and development

Education Reforms and Development of Chinese Minority Women

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In the old China, because of historical and cultural reasons, most Chinese minority women did not have the chance to go to school. Consequently there were no cultural or educational positions available to them at all.

With the establishment of the new China, the Central Government and the local governments have actively carried out policies of equality between men and women, and equality for the different minorities of China. As a result of the women's liberation movement, the Chinese minority women's education has experienced major development. Their cultural-educational position, social position, economic positions as well as family and marital status have been raised considerably, and a great many women have emerged as experts in several different fields. These women experts display their talents, adding an illustrious chapter to the annals of minority women as the masters of their own affairs.

However, an imbalance in minority women's educational development still exists. Education for minority women in the agricultural, pastoral and other remote areas is still far from developing sufficiently. High rates of illiteracy and semi-literacy are found. These situations cannot possibly meet the needs of women in the rapidly increasing worldwide development of modern scientific and

technological advancement. Neither do they meet the needs of the developing situations of reform and of opening doors to the outside world. Therefore, we must enhance the education of Chinese minority women to help them take advantage of the new social reforms, and thus to succeed in social competition.

In fuller detail I will now describe the present situation of Chinese minority women's education, the existing problems and the current reforms for the development of minority women.

I. The Present Situation of Minority Women's Education

Generally speaking, minority women's education in China has seen rapid development. Currently, more and more minority women are receiving higher education. The employment rate of minority women living in cities is fairly high, and they have made remarkable achievements. For example:

1. Since the founding of new China, the govenrment has invested a large amount of money in building primary schools, middle schools, technical schools, universities and colleges of higher education with emphasis on specific help to develop minority education.

According to 1993 statistics, there were 101 ordinary [i.e. not limited to minority students] schools in minority autonomous areas with 161,103 students. This made an increase of 156,628 (or 36 times as many) over the 1952 enrollment of 4,475.

In ordinary schools of the whole of China, the 1993 statistics show 163,224 minority students enrolled in addition to the enrollment in the minority areas. Compared with the 1952 figure of 2,948 minority students in all of China's ordinary schools, this means an increase of 55.37 times.

In 1993, among the minority students over 40% were women. Women from sixteen minority groups (Korean, Manchu, Mongolian, etc.) received education higher than the average level throughout the country.

2. Different kinds of courses for minority women have been instituted. The minority women from Xingjian, Tibetan autonomous regions, and also from the remote areas, have participated in cultural and technical courses run by the government by institutions of higher learning, and by the China Women's Federation. For example, the 13 minority institutes supervised by the State Commission for Minority Affairs run courses specifically for minority women.

3. The Central University for Nationalities is the only institution on the highest educational level in China which enrolls intellectual women from the 56 minorities. In the early 1950s female students made up only a small percentage of the student body. Thee are now (1995) 1,485 women students, or 35% of the total number. Of the post-graduate students, 99 are female, or 49.25%. Of these, 7 are in doctoral prog-rams, or 35.7% of the Ph.D. students.

Among the University's professors, 20 are women, representing 20% of the total. In addition, 216 women are associate professors, or 41.5% of the total. There are also three minority ladies who are deputies of the National People's Congress and the Chinese Political Consultative Conference on the Beijing city level and on district levels. One of these is the leader of the University. Among department directors, 47 are women. In brief, minority women of the Central University have won high positions in various fields.

While the above describes achievements won by minority women in education, we must not ignore the problems still existing in the education of minority women. On the whole, education of the Chinese minority women is less developed than it is for the Han people and for minority men.

Following are some of the problems:

1. A large portion of minority women are either illiterate or only semi-literate. According to the statistics of 1990, minority women represent 64% of the total number of illiterates, or 33.9% of the total population of minority women. Of the illiterate and semi-literate group, women over 16 years of age from 33 minority groups account for over 40%. In some poor areas or remote, mountainous areas, the education deprivation rate is very high; a large portion of those affected are women.

2. The portion of the migrant minority women is bigger but they are unable to follow up on their technical training, resulting in loss of skills. This of course affects their employability and also the protection of their rights.

According to the 1990 statistics, the migrant population of minority people in different areas is 2,201,190. Of these 1.133,814 are women and 1,076,480 are men. Women are more in number that men. For instance, Guangdong province is one of the of provinces which has the highest number of migrant minority people. But the migrant center does not take sufficient measures to provide skilled training, popularization of education, health protection, and marriage and family assistance for the minority women. Thus the women meet many practical difficulties in finding employment and in dealing with life.

3. Minority students are mainly from cities and towns. Few come from agricultural and pastoral areas. Even fewer women students are from poor areas.

4. In some minority areas people look down upon girls, and do not allow them to go to school. In Tibet the state implements a specific policy of providing students with food, lodging and medical treatment as well as free tuition. But still, few people send girls to school.

5. Marriage at an extremely early age presents a serious problem, with the accompanying early birthgiving and many children. This means that the adult minority women must do very heavy house work with no time or energy to get cultural and technical training.

6. Some minority women do not have a strong of self-respect, self-confidence, or self-independence, nor the inner drive to improve themselves, to overcome their lack of initiative and diligence in study.

7. In some minority areas insufficient attention has been attached to the education of women living in agricultural and pastoral areas. There are no effective measures or funding for education of minority women.

II. Some Proposals to Develop Minority Women's Education

The fact that women of minority groups are changing their positions in life tell us again that education is an important measure in developing women's intellectual abilities. If the minority women want to develop and raise their position in life, as well as to realize their hopes for equality, development and progress, first of all they should strive for an opportunity to be educated. They should seek to enhance women's education and to provide an environment for gaining cultural and scientific knowledge. They must realize that they have the right to a full enjoyment of receiving an education. Through education minority women will master modern cultural and scientific skills as well as those for social and everyday life enjoyment in order to develop their own personalities and to enhance their abilities in social competition. Only in this way can minority women raise their status in the different fields of society, develop their talents and realize their expectations.

The last part concerns the proposals for promoting the reforms and development of minority

women's education in order to resolve the current problems in that field.

1. The Central government and local government should increase their investment of funds in mino-rity education, and enhance basic education in the agricultural, pastoral and poor areas to resolve the problems there, such as: being deprived of education, and the high rate of school drop-out.

2. The government should invest funding to set up the basis for training minority adult women to conduct training courses in different fields. Furthermore, it is necessary to set up the basis in the agricultural, pastoral and poor areas to facilitate the training of the minority women.

3. It is necessary to implement a specific policy in the enrollment of students in the regular schools, for instance, to accept minority women who have lower grades, and to increase the proportion of enrollment of minority women.

4. It is necessary to fully develop the advantages of different minority institutes, while training the women experts of higher levels to train core members of the minority women.

5. It is necessary to set up educational and administrative organizations for minority women's education to study, in a timely way, the situations concerning minority female educationand existing problems, to work out measures to improve those situations, and to help the government improve management skills so that minority women's education may continuously develop.

6. The Women's Federation in big cities should express their concerns about the migrant women and improve professional and technical training and employment instructions, as well as take effective measures to protect migrant women's rights and interests.

7. We hope that the United Nations and Asian-Pacific women's organizations will do everything possible to assist Chinese minority women's research and training organizations. We will jointly promote education and training for minority women in order to help them get out of poverty and become self- supporting.

In brief, we should set up a team of effective educational and training organizations to promote minority women's progress and speed up minority women's education, in order to meet the new developing world.

STRENGTHEN ADULT EDUCATION TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT

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Emphasis must be placed either on women's development or on the basic education of women to achieve the general goal of "International Women's Decade", "Equality, Development and Peace" and the specific goals of employment, health care and education.

Such a conclusion is based on the summation of international women movements. For further realization of the goals of "Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women", women's education must be given great importance and strengthened. Adult education, an important component of the education system, plays a direct and effective role in the improvement of the quality of workers, a fact which has been proven worldwide. Therefore, adult education and the promotion of women development are becoming the common concerns ofmany countries, including China. To promote the development of women, the Chinese government has taken many measures to develop women adult education, which can be put into two categories: social education and institutional education.

1. Social Education

Social education has taken on a new aspect after the Reform. China is an agricultural country with 80% of rural population and half of its population are women. Women's adult education in rural areas is considered as social education. For years, various forms of social education have been brought forth to eliminate illiteracy among women and to promote the quality of women's lives.

Since 1989, together with 12 government units: the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Forestation, the State Education Commission, the State Science and Technology Commission, the State Nationality Commission, the Ministry of Radios, Films and Televisions, Chinese Association of Science and Technology, Agricultural Bank of China, Poverty-Elimination Panel of the State Council and the State

Family Planning Commission, the Chinese Women's Federation has organized a campaign of "Knowledge and Skills Learning, Success through Contribution in Competition". This effort combines women's development work with economic work and evolved new forms and contents of women education within the framework of the economic reforms. The goal is to promote the quality of women in rural areas through large-scale education and training and to advance the process of women development, and to speed up the economic framework of the country. Since 1994, social education has moved into its second five-year period.

It the first five-year period, i.e. from 1989 to 1993, the achievements of social education were reflected in the following seven aspects:

1) it has enhanced the educational, scientific and technological quality of rural women and strengthened the science and technology, which are the fundamental work of rural economy and social development;

2) it has aroused the enthusiasm of rural women and promoted the development of rural production and economy;

3) it has promoted the development of rural socialized service system and helped to deepen reforms in rural areas;

4) it has disseminated the spirit of patriotism and collectivism and promoted the construction of socialist spiritual civilization in rural areas;

5) it has trained a scientific and technological team of rural women and made women to be a backbone force in the development;

6) it has increased the economic income of rural women and raised their status both in the family and society; and

7) it has stimulated the work of rural women and intimated the ties the women masses with the Party, the governments and the women union organizations.

According to the statistics, 20.03 million illiterate women have achieved literacy, 96 million women have received the training of various applied technology, and 510 thousand women have got the title of peasant technicians. A great number of women have been making outstanding contributions to the rural economic development. Fifteen thousand women were cited by provincial government, and 106,700 families where women played major roles have become scientific and technological demonstration households. The agricultural production value produced by rural women has accounted for about 50% of the total of GNP. There were 50% of households where half of their incomes were gained by women in the middle and east areas. In poor areas, a lot of women have solved the problem of food and clothing and some of them have been becoming comparatively well off.

The term of 2Ls, i.e. learning knowledge and learning science and technology, embodied centrally the social education on rural women. Various regions created many forms and models in line with their actual circumstances and summarized some precious experience. For example, through the illiteracy elimination training, universalization training and professional training, the 2Ls activity in Zhejiang Province has enhanced wholistically the educational aspects. Scientific and technolocigal training has developed the capacities of rural women, strengthened their knowledge and senses of the market and laws, and enhanced their consciousness of competition, science and technology, risk and benefits. In other words, these trainings have helped prepare them mentally and psychologically for living in a market-oriented economy.

Trainings of applied technology were divided intc three levels: lower, middle and higher, according to the needs of rural economic development, focusing on the dissemination of new technology and new variety. Women were taught not only planting, breeding and processing, but also the knowledge of market economy and law. At the same time, attention was paid to upgrading the levels of training, and mobilizing more women to study in agricultural correspondence universities, broadcasting universities and join vocational and technical trainings.

In Jiangsu Province, it was determined that the contents, the levels and the stress of training should be determined by the needs of market. They made use of the original training model, and innovated in exploring various aspects and channels to develop a series of trainings, such as the adult training to eliminate the

illiteracy; the universalized training to help the women get the "Green Certificate" and become peasant rechnicians; and the upgrading training to learn new technology and new achievements.

Some areas in Jiangsu have also conducted trainings on computer operations, a foreign language. There are plans to conduct a two year-course on marketing. In this way, they have extended the 2Ls to 5Ls; namely learning knowledge, learning science and technology, learning marketing, learning economic management and learning law.

The Provincial Women's Union organized to compile the "100 Questions and Answers to Marketing" as the training material and have finished the training of trainers for the provinces. At present, the training workshops has been conducted at different levels. The training took a variety of forms, such as lecturing, correspondence, information issuing and practical marketing. It was expected that some 100,000 women will receive the systematic training of trading and marketing.

2. Institutional Education

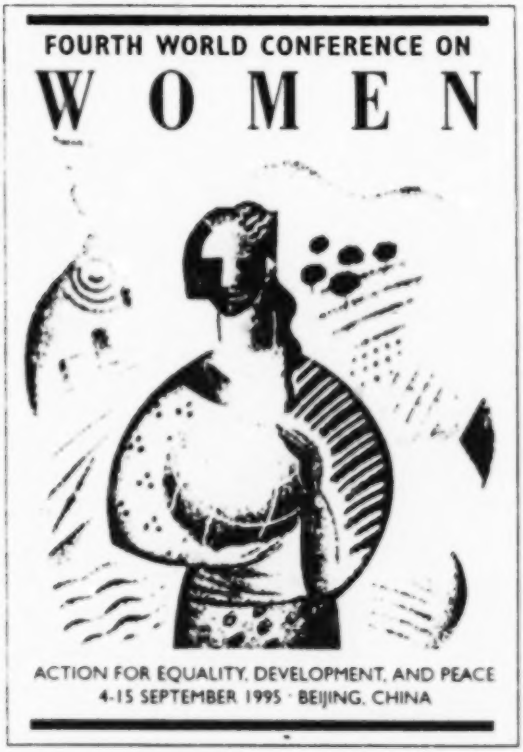
The adult institutional education has developed rapidly with the development of adult education and has made remarkable achievements. The numbers of professional women entering adult institutions to receive various diploma and non-diploma education courses have increased, specially in the cities. Full-time , part-time and spare-time studies are offered in institutions like independent adult colleges, adult education institutes of formal universities, adult schools funded by communities, television universities, evening universities and correspondence universities. According to statistics, female students account for about 35% or even 40% of the total enrollment in ordinary adult colleges.

The All China Women's Federation at national and other levels have set up their adult colleges for training women. The colleges are networked all over the country. In some provinces, there are even more than one of such colleges. The China College for Women Administrators at which I am working, is a women's adult college run by the China Women's Federation and approved by the State Education Commission. It was first set up in July 1949 by SONG Qingling, CAI Chang, DENG Yinchao, KANG Keqing and some other old revolutionaries and women public figures. It was deeply loved by MAO Zedong, ZHOU Enlai, ZHU De and other Party and national leaders. In 1984, it was authorized by the State education Commission as an adult college for women, which in 1988 set up a large-scaled branch in Shandong province.

In 1991 the college was listed among A-class schools by the State Education Commission as a result of the evaluation of adult schools. Now it has more than 250 full-time and part-time teachers, most of whom are professors, associate professors and lecturers. The majority of the young teachers are M.A. graduates. In recent years nearly 50 middle-aged young backbone teachers have been sent abroad for a visit or further study and some of them have been employed as experts by the United Nations or foreign universities. Also we have invited some international experts to our college as visiting professors. In the process of administration and textbook compilation, we got support and cooperation from and with Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong University, Hong Kong City University and Singapore Nanyang University of Science and Technology, etc.

Now there are six departments, one division and one center in our college, namely: Social Work Department, Preschool Education Department, Department of Law, Department of Secretary, Department of Economic Administration, Foreign Languages Department, Basic Theory Division and Training Center. These departments and center are supposed to be responsible for diploma and non-diploma education. The whole college is able to offer more than ten specialities. At present there are over 600 full-time students in the college, including three-year students and four-year students at college level. Nearly 2000 students have graduated from the college. In non-diploma education, we mainly offer in-service training as well as all kinds of short-term and technical training for administrators.

With the advent of reform, market liberalization and modernization, we are deepening our teaching reforms, breaking up the traditional model of school administration. In the process, and we have made new progress and achievements, such as the following:



1) **The gradual increase in the number of trainees.** Firstly, we have newly built the Department of Preschool Education Administration. Secondly, the Department of Preschool Education Administration has added such a major as pre-school education so as to train more teachers for nurseries and kindergartens, and expand the trainings to staff members and not only head teachers from the field of pre-school education. Meanwhile, short-term workshops and seminars were provided to the staff from nurseries and kindergartens to meet the needs of the society and establish a more vivid teaching environment.

It is the rapid development of the women entrepreneurs that offers our college another opportunity for having more trainees. Since 1985, our college has conducted ten training courses on modern enterprises administration in line with requests from the participants and enterprises concerned. In this case, our college has established the Department of Economy Administration, aiming at providing better conditions for women entrepreneurs to obtain education for diploma, likewise adding more chances for women entrepreneurs to attend short-term training courses.

Since 1994, to be particular, the All China Women's Federation (ACWF) with financial support from the government of Germany, and the United Nations International Development Organization, has launched a programme to develop a comprehensive training course, "To Promote Women's Participation in the Modernization Process". Our college has been appointed as both the project institution and the training center for the programme, carrying out a three-year-and-three-phase training task. We are to prepare a group of specially trained teachers, and to compile textbooks for "Model Training Package" under the guidance of the international experts from the United Nations laying a foundation for training and consultancy for women entrepreneurs in a long run. Shandong sub-college as well as two local schools for women administrators respectively in Jiangsu, Hebei have shared the training tasks with our college in the course of the programme. This ensures a further development of the teachers and a high level of the textbooks for training, and at the same time to have deepened the cooperative relationship among us, and enhanced the educational network with the colleges and schools attached to All China Women's Federation.

With the support of the Organizational work Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and with the department concerning the organizational work of ACWF, our college is about to operate another training course for women administrators in higher leading positions .This aims to increase the participation of women in politics.

2) **The continuous renewal of training contents.** In order to meet the requirements for women administrators at marketing economy, the college had added up more new courses and renewed training contents which are well accepted by the participants. The new courses are:Computer Operations and Applications, Speech and Eloquence, Public Relations, Administration and Leadership, Business Negotiation, Marketing Business, Sociology and Social Work, etc.

Our college has reinforced the renewal of special courses in Secretarial Administration, Office Automation and English. A four-year-course on Law and a two-year course on Social Affairs have also been initiated. The training programme aims at eliminating poverty and improving the skills of women

administrators in rural areas. Since 1994, we have been conducting the training courses for 300 women administrators at grassroot levels in remote and rural areas. This is sponsored and supported by Ford Foundation, All China Women's Federation, All China Federation for Poverty Elimination and Office for Poverty Elimination of the State Council. the participants, through the courses the institute has set up the partnership between the women from the poor rural areas and the women administrators and entrepreneurs from wealthy areas. Meanwhile, we have also standardized our teaching and training programmes and textbooks based on the needs for the progress of training in the long run and the new teaching content within our college.

3) A more flexible teaching methodology. The Flexibility in teaching can be well noticed in the following three aspects:

Firstly, the college itself has adopted an open and cooperative teaching method by breaking up the boundary of the college, making wide-ranged cooperation with the society, setting up more sub-schools, correspondence centers, conducting various kinds of training courses and seminars and enlarging the scopes of running schools.

Secondly, more attention has been paid to the cultivation of the trainees' abilities, the strengthening of field practice, expanding the activities of consultation, and promoting scientific research.

Thirdly, an extra curriculum class has been opened, where the students relate to the whole class the ways in which they were brought up and evaluate training courses ad their teachers.

What is more inspiring and encouraging is that the China College for Women Administrators, with the help of All China Women Federation and State Education Commission, has prepared an expansion and transfer of the college. The project started in 1992; the first phase of the construction of the campus has almost been completed and the college now is going to move into its new campus close to Olympic Village before the opening of the Fourth Session of the World Women Conferenc to be held this coming September. In the second phase of the construction, such modern facilities as Asia-Pacific Women Training Center, Experimental Kindergarten and All-round Functional gymnaisum will be built. The campus covers an area of 150 mu and the design of the architecture is a mixture of Chinese and foreign characteristic. The school will be able to accommodate 500 students. Madame CHEN Muhua, vice-chaiperson of the Standing Committee of the National People Congress and chairperson of All China Women's Federation will be the honorary president of China Women's College, whose target is to build the college into a world-class and comprehensive one of higher learning for women.

The presence and guidance of all the friends, experts and scholars present are warmly welcome.

Women and Education in GUANGDONG PROVINCE

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Approximately, Guangdong has 32.4 million of female permanent residents, which is 48.3% of the total population.

In a broader sense, women eduction in Guangdong is the kind of education that aims to upgrade the multi-quality of women according to their existing situations and characteristics. It means not only cultural education, but moral, psychological, legal education, vocational and skills training, administration and environmental education and others.

This paper is based on the Guangdong Women Education Concept, that is to analyze the success and confusion of Guangdong Women and to introduce the efforts of Guangdong Provincial Federation of Women in Women Education and the difficulties that are being faced by the Guangdong women in education.

I. Success and Confusion

The wave of Reform and Open Policy is flooding the Old land of China. Guangdong is running fast ahead in this wave. Wherever there is action, there is reaction. The fast developing Guangdong is now at the most conflicting margin between old traditions and modernization. Although women in Guangdong are in the process of developing, they are also facing challenges and confusions.

a.) **Rural Women** have changed their subordinate role in the new production mode of agriculture, but their educational standard is still comparatively low and they are not yet equipped with skills. The mobilization of excess human power started from Manpower and unwed women power. The married women who have become the "Madam at Home" also have to be responsible for agricultural production. In the villages of Guangdong, women power occupies 60-80% of the total human power in agriculture. Women have changed from depending on man in the past, to independence. The trend has forced women to become empowered and independent, and created many female old hands to engage in agricultural production and trading. However, there is still a certain percentage of women who cannot manage to cope up with the new scientific technology and to compete with others in the mass production and commercial mode of business.

b.) Although most of the women have their jobs, still there is a tendency to lay off women engaged in the national enterprises, especially the elderly and low educated, non-skilled women workers.

c.) Although there are many capable women, their participation in politics is far behind. Lesser participation means lesser chance for the upliftment of economy.

d.) Although there is equality between women and men is mandated by law, there is still the relatively high percentage of women who are functionally illiterate on legal knowledge. In a research of women in Guangdong, 86.5% of the 2000 interviewees

recognized that "women and men are equal before the law". However, their ignorance on legal knowledge makes them incapable to protect their legal rights. For example, some women know that their husbands have a concubine, but they do not know their legal rights, blaming their own destiny instead.

e.) Free marriage has become the trend, divorce rate is going up drastically, but those women who have the traditional values are at loss. Many women enjoy free marriage, but don't go for divorce. They don't want to take the consequences of divorce. Since once divorced, they are at loss and have no strength to continue living independently.

f.) The young generation of women have good education, but on average, the educational standard is still low comparing to men. From a research about the girl students in school in Guangdong in 1994, statistically there were 44.3% of girls in Junior High School; 35.6% in Senior High School; 37.3% in the University; and 25.3% in the Graduate school. The absolute number of illiterate women is still big. It can be concluded that the difference on educational standard between men and women will not be changed much because of social development; there must be self-consciousness to catch up with men in the society.

II. Concrete Solutions:

1. Organize women to participate in the skill competitions that are related to economic development in order to upgrade the skill level of women.

2. Promote a civilized and advanced mentality of women, create a new era of women with health self-image and encourage women to be active and take initiatives for the upliftment of women status. Use different ways to build up women's self-esteem, which includes self-empowering, creativeness and active elements. Educated men who are allied partners of women are also invited to promote civilized and progressive mentality of women.

3. Practice the policy of categorized way of supervision, mobilizes women of the developed area to help the poor hilltribes women.

4. Promote the improvement of law and the popularization of legal knowledge. Let the spirit of "women law" take effect in every household.

5. Start the "Family-Cultural establishment", promote the scientific and civilized way of living and help the women to improve the quality of their family/marriage life as well as upgrade the level of family education.

III. Existing Problems:

1. Unbalanced economic development that leads to unbalanced women status and women education. Recently, our government tried to help the poor hilltribe people, but because of the diversity of the problems, women education was not always the priority.

2. "Lay-off women workers should be re-trained so that they can find new opportunities/jobs that will help them to survive. Our Federation has physical facilities and good educators are available, only that we are lacking of operational funds.

3. The research resources about women educations is not enough. Especially on research and studies of work and strategies there is lack of funds for specific topics.

Women's Literacy and Empowerment: The NELLORE Experience

Anita Dighe

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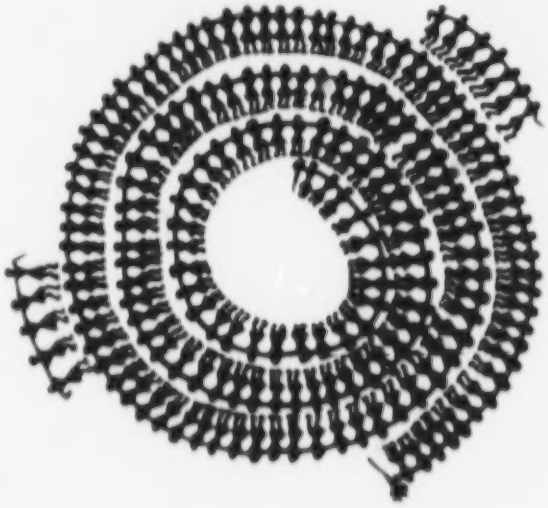

Understanding Empowerment

The term empowerment has been bandied about somuch in recent years that there is now a genuinedanger of it being coopted as a 'development buzzword' that will meet the same fate as terms such as 'decentralization', 'people's participation' and the like. Despite this, it is important to understand what the term connotes. After attempting a review of literature, Shetty (1992) comes to the conclusion that empowerment is easy to 'intuit' but complex to define. But while it may be difficult to define, one is able to understand its meaning when one sees the manifestation of what it implies. Thus an empowered individual would be one who experiences a sense of self-confidence and self-worth; a person who critically analyzes his/her social and political environment; a person who is able to exercise control over decisions that affect his/her life.

These are, however, not the only dimensions or facets that define empowerment. But while recognizing that empowerment is multi-faceted in nature, an attempt is made in this paper to examine how a literacy campaign has brought about women's empowerment. This is done by analyzing the anti-arrack (country liquor) agitation of Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh, which has shown how literacy played a significant role in raising the consciousness of village women so that they have now spearheaded an agitation that is fast engulfing the state of Andhra Pradesh.

In the last section of this paper an attempt is made to define some aspects/dimensions of empowerment as gleaned from the Nellore experience.

Literacy and the Anti-Arrack Agitation in Nellore District

The origin of the agitation can be traced back to the implementation of the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) in the district two years ago. The campaign was officially launched in Nellore from January 1991 after an intensive preparation that lasted for four months. As in most TLC's, in Nellore the district collector was the official organizer and the prime mover of the campaign. Prior to launching the campaign, special efforts were made to elicit active support for the campaign by involving various political parties, bureaucrats of different development departments and organizations/agencies/individuals representing a cross-section of people. Nellore district, with a literacy rate of 49% (national average 52.1% and state average 45.1%), had 450,000 non-literates in the 9-35 age group.

At the district level, the Collector, with a team of dedicated workers, constituted committees such as an academic committee to provide resource support to the campaign, and a cultural committee to use varied cultural forms such as song, drama, street plays, to convey to the non-literates the importance and the need for literacy.

In order to generate sufficient enthusiasm for literacy, wall writing, pamphleteering and even *padyatras* or processions were carried out. As the main purpose of the campaign was to enthuse not just the non-literates but also literates who were expected to become volunteers, *kalajathas* or cultural troupes were formed. A large number of these artists who came from the rural areas toured extensively in the district giving about 7,000 performances in an idiom and language that was understood by the village folk. The themes of the plays and songs involved problems encountered in life because of illiteracy - exploitation of labour, low wages, untouchability, powerelessness, inability to deal with social evils such as dowry, alcoholism, wife beating etc. The ideological content of the songs and plays underscored the importance of a people's movement for fighting illiteracy and of the relevance of literacy in understanding the nature of exploitation. Usually after the conclusion of a *kalajatha* a call was given inviting volunteers to take up literacy work. Those who volunteered were asked to take an oath in the presence of the audience to work for the cause of literacy. The method became so popular that about 55,000 volunteers registered their names when the need was only for 40,000 (Shatrugna, 1992).

After creating a favourable climate for the campaign, a three-tiered training programme ensured that training of the functionaries at various levels was carried out. The literacy classes were started thereafter and an attempt was made by the volunteers to complete each of the three levels of literacy primers that were prepared for the campaign. That women's participation was high is borne out by the fact that of the 150,000 who completed the first phase of the campaign successfully, 100,000 were women. Most of them belonged to the Scheduled Castes and backward classes (Shatrugna, 1992)

As the main purpose of the campaign was not only gaining literacy skills but also development and empowerment, the post-literacy phase consisted of formation of Jana Chetana Kendras (Centers for People's Awareness) where the problems facing the villagers were discussed. The overall experience was that these kendras numbering 6000, were very popular with women taking a leading role in their functioning. As the women came together at the centres, they not only discussed the general problems faced by the village, but also shared their experiences and problems with one another.

The origin of the anti-arrack agitation was due to various factors. The role played by the CPI (Communist Party of India)-(ML) groups in bringing opposition to the arrack business on to the national agenda cannot be ignored. In the earlier phase of the work of the CPI (ML) groups (mainly in the Telegana districts), the focus was on reduction in the retail price of arrack. Subsequently, these groups took up the struggle to stop the arrack auctions and prevent the sale of arrack in the villages. In this effort, they received tremendous support from women who suffered daily at the hands of their inebriated husbands. But this effort of the CPI

(ML) groups was 'top-down' - women's participation was elicited but they were not involved in the planning and decision-making processes. In other words, the initiative did not come from the women themselves.

What spurred the agitation was a small incident that took place in Doobagunta village in Nellore district. In this village, the women of the village stopped the vending of arrack after two men of the village had died after a bout of drinking. This incident had been preceded by a lot of discussion among the villagers (especially women) about the evils of excessive drinking. These discussions focused on how in many families the men drank all they earned and how women had to work and run the household on their earnings and get beaten daily in the bargain by their drunken husbands. The volunteers of Jana Vigyan Vedika organized by the CPI (M) cadre had played an important role in generating this consciousness (Balagopal, 1992).

In the post-literacy primer called *Chaduvu Veligu* (light of knowledge), the Doobagunta example was cited in the form of a lesson titled *Adavallu Ekamaithe* (if women unite). The text of the lesson was a story that was written from the perspective of women of Doobagunta village - of the harassment they had suffered at the hands of their drunken husbands, of the manner in which they had discussed their problems in the literacy class, of their resolve to take collective action and of the success they had achieved by closing down the arrack shop in the village. The narration in the text was simple, direct and ended with an exhortation to the reader that if they (the women of Doobagunta) could do it, "you can't you too do it? Think.....".

As the primer with this lesson was introduced in the post-literacy centres, it had an electrifying impact on women. In several villages, women's committees were formed and citing the Doobagunta example, agitation against the sale of arrack began. First the husbands, sons and male relatives habituated to liquor were advised not to drink. As the women realized that as long as the arrack shop in the village was open, it would be impossible to prevent men from drinking, they issued a warning to the arrack shop owners to close down the shops. Due to the pressure from

women's groups, arrack shops were closed either with the consent of the owner, or by force. Women formed squads in the villages and a vigil was kept round the clock to ensure that no arrack entered the village either trhough the arrack contractor or the excise department.

By August 1992, the anti-arrack agitation had spread through the villages of Nellore district. August is the month in which excise auctions are held and on August 11, the date fixed by the collector of Nellore for auction, there was a major demonstration of women at the collector's office, forcing the auction to be postponed. Subsequently, the auction would be announced but would get postponed each time due to massive mobilization of women. Gradually, all the opposition parties, voluntary organizations, women's groups, civil liberties organizations joined the protest movement so that by the end of November 1992, the anti-arrack agitation has spread to a large number of districts of Andhra Pradesh.

But the success of the anti-arrack agitation suffered a setback when in December, 1992 the Chief Minister of Andra Pradesh branded such work as 'anti-

government' and announced that strict action would be taken against those government functionaries who supported the movement and worked actively for it.

Women, Literacy and Empowerment - An Analysis of the Nellore Experience

From the Nellore experience, one can begin to develop a broad conceptual framework of what empowerment means.

1. Empowerment and Marginalized Groups

The term empowerment is focused on marginalized groups - the landless, the powerless, the voiceless. In Nellore, it was the scheduled castes, and other backward caste women who took up the arrack issue and who as a result, have spearheaded an agitation that has now elicited support from middle class women and men. The anti-arrack agitation has become such a powerful women's movement and has taken such deep roots in the Andhra countryside that the yearly arrack sales have now been postponed indefinitely in Nellore district and in some other parts of Andhra Pradesh.

2. The Process-oriented Nature of Empowerment

It is clear from the Nellore experience that empowerment is not an end-of-project product or a state that can be attained within defined time-frames. Instead, empowerment is a dynamic and on-going process which can only be located on a continuum (Shetty, 1992). The total literacy campaign in Nellore had given an opportunity to women to acquire literacy skills, and as a result, to begin to feel sufficiently self-confident to function as autonomous individuals. But if acquisition of literacy became the essential step in empowering then at the individual level, the issue of arrack provided the necessary spark that united them at the collective level. If empowerment is viewed as a continuum, empowerment at the group level is essential but this cannot be brought about without empowerment at the individual level.

3. The Holistic Nature of Empowerment

Empowerment cannot be constrained by a sectoral approach. Nor can it be related to just a set of activities or inputs. Empowerment is an all-encompassing term in which a whole range of economic, social and political activities, including group organisation, agriculture and income generation projects, education, integrated health care and so on, would work synergistically towards the common goal of empowering the poor (Bhasin, 1985). In Nellore, the arrack issue was the only issue on which the women's movement was built. This was a conscious decision taken by the women themselves. But as arrack shops were closed and the men saved money for running the household, the impact of a slightly better diet on their health was immediately discernible. The debilitating effect of arrack on the health of the menfolk, and the consequent effect on their productivity, became an issue of great interest to both men and women.

4. Empowerment Deals with 'Strategic' rather than 'Practical Gender Interests'

It is important to differentiate between what Molyneux (1981) terms 'the practical gender needs and the stategic gender interests'. She notes that the former are short term and linked to immediate needs arising from women's current responsibilities vis-a-vis the livehood of their families and children, while the latter addresses bigger issues such as sexual division of labour within the home, the removal of institutionalized forms of gender discrimination, the establishment of political equality, freedom of choice over child-bearing, and the adoption of adequate measures against male violence and control over women.

It appears from the Nellore experience that to begin with, the agitation addressed the 'practical gender interest' in so far as its genesis was due to the rural women's concern about their husbands' callous indifference to their responsibilities towards the family and to the upbringing of their children. But as the agitation picked up momentum, it appeared that it had the potential to address the 'strategic gender interests,' although the women from Nellore have strategically decided to focus exclusively on the arrack issue for the present. This was made apparent from the discussions with village women in some villages during which it was categorically stated that they would first win the battle against arrack before taking up any other issue. But interestingly, power relationships between men and women within the family and outside are slowly beginning to change. Women have formed anti-arrack

vigilance squads in the village to ensure that illicit arrack is not smuggled into the village. There have been instances when the women have successfully challenged the bureaucracy, the police, and the politicians. But to what extent the anti-arrack agitation would be able to sustain itself, consolidate its gains and move on the other issues of concern to women is now uncertain due to the present policy of the state government, which has cracked down severely on those functionaries who support the agitation.

5. Empowerment has Cognitive, Psychological and Economic Components

According to Stromquist (1988), empowerment is a socio-political concept that goes beyond 'participation', and 'consciousness-raising'. She calls for a fuller definition of empowerment that considers cognitive, psychological and economic components. The cognitive component refers to women's understanding of their conditions of subordination and the reasons that create such conditions. The psychological component includes the development of a feeling that women can improve their condition and the belief that they can succeed in their efforts. In Nellore, as women have collectively picketed the arrack shops, marched unitedly to the district collector's office and organized a *dharna* to ensure that auctions are not allowed to take place, they have become strengthened in their conviction that it is only such united action that can bring about any change. "Now that we have come out of our homes, we will fight to the very end" is the refrain that has been echoed in village after village.

But the third component, namely the economic, has not been addressed in Nellore so far. This component of empowerment signifies that women are able to engage in a productive activity that will allow them some degree of financial independence, however small and burdensome in the beginning. Such income-generating activities, however, are difficult to implement because they are risky, time-consuming and hard to sustain.

6. Democratizing Aspect of Empowerment

A key feature of empowerment is that it elicits the widest possible community participation and is, in that sense, democratizing (Shetty, 1992). This aspect of the Nellore experience is important for the agitation has mobilized support not only from certain sections of village women but also from certain sections of village men. Alongside, various women's groups, political parties, unions of lawyers, doctors, etc., have lent support to the agitation. An interesting development has been that the village women took a conscious decision not to identify leaders for their agitation. It is said that their argument was that once leaders were identified, they would be 'bought' over by the politicians.

7. Understanding the Nature of Literacy that Empowers

Conceptually it is important to distinguish between literacy that empowers and literacy which domesticates. Traditionally, literacy programmes have focused on acquisition of technical skills of reading and writing. While the importance of acquisition of literacy skills should not be discounted, the fact that remains that in the case of women, such a literacy oftentimes merely reinforces their domestic role and does not bring about

any change in social relations either with in the family or outside. Literacy that empowers on the other hand, seeks to combine both consciousness-raising and participation so that women not only understand the causes of their oppression but also take steps to ameliorate their conditions. In Nellore, it seems that in the basic literacy skills, the emphasis was on acquisition. It was, however, in the post literacy phase that 'awareness-raising' around issues of common concern, started taking place in a systematic manner. Conciousness-raising or the development of a critical view of the micro and macro reality of individuals, is a major contribution of Paulo Freire. The events at the Doobagunta village of Nellore district were probably precipitated because of the discussions that had taken place at the post literacy centers on the evils of excessive drinking. More importantly, it was the manner in which the Doobagunta incident was converted into a lesson in the post-literacy primer that has pedagogical relevance. The lesson on the form of a story was direct was direct, simple and written from the perspective of the women of Doobagunta. The other lessons in the primer dealt with the issues of poverty, landlessness, minimum wages, problems with the ration shop, health services and such other day-to day-problems of the poor. This primer evoked tremendous interest among the neo-literates.

The role of literacy in the overall process of empowerment, however, needs to be understood. Is literacy a necessary pre-condition for empowerment? That this is not necessarily so is borne out by the experience of the Women's Development Programme (WDP) in Rajasthan and of *Mahila Samakhya* in three other states of India. This experience has shown that even though non-literate women can become empowered, the demand for literacy does get articulated by them after some time. Literacy is then perceived not as an end in itself but as a means to enable women to gain access to the storehouse of information and knowledge that has been denied to them. But literacy skills have to be constantly honed so that as new vistas open up to women, the desire to continue beyond basic literacy becomes a felt need. In this process, literacy can also become a vehicle for creative self-expression so that stories, songs and poems are written by women themselves.

8. Context-specific Nature of Empowerment

According to Shetty (1992), empowerment can be defined only within the local social, cultural, economic, political, and historical context. Even with regard to the anti-arrack agitation, it is important to understand the contextual factors that precipitated the agitation. For ten years, the importance of the arrack has increased steadily in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Arrack consists principally of rectified spirit which is obtained by distilling fermented molasses. Over the years, despite the change in government, arrack has become an important source of excise revenue for the State Government. This has increased steadily from Rs. 39 crore in 1970-71 to Rs. 812 crore in 1991-92. This increase has not been an innocuous increase caused by changing life styles and habits but the consequence of a deliberate policy pursued by the government (Balagopal, 1992). Unwilling to collect the taxes it imposes on the urban rich and unwilling to touch the rural rich, the government has increasingly turned to liquor sales as a major source of revenue. This brazenness on the part of the government has resulted in the setting up of more and more arrack shops in the villages and in the literal bringing of arrack to the doorsteps of the villagers with, at the same time, increases in the retail price from year to year.

The manufacture of arrack is the monopoly of the government distilleries but its sole selling rights are auctioned area-wise to contractors. That arrack is an extremely lucrative enterprise is evident from the fact that over the years arrack contractors have amassed great wealth and have started wielding political influence.

It is against this background that the anti-arrack agitation has to be understood. For at one level there is the political role of arrack and the difficulty of fighting it, a difficulty that was not immediately apparent to the thousands of rural women who took up what they perceived to be a just struggle. Their anguish and sense of outrage was evident when they joined the agitation and posed the following questions: "We do not have drinking water, no work, no schools, for our children and our wages are low. Nothing is available here except

arrack. It is the only thing that comes to the village regularly, uninterruptedly. Why is the government so interested in supplying only arrack so religiously? Why does it not stop the supply? We will now fight to stop arrack from entering our village".

9. Sustainability is an Important Aspect of Empowerment

The direction of empowerment is that of self-reliance and withdrawal of external agents wherever the initial impetus has come from outside. Grassroots organisations, an integral part of most empowerment strageties, are thus seen as critical elements in ensuring sustainability. But the total literacy campaigns are funded by the Government. That being so, the questions to be asked are: "What is the extent of empowerment that would be acceptable? What is the 'space' that would be provided by a government-funded programme?" That the 'space' provided was not very much has now become evident from the fact that the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has expressed his anger at the manner in which certain district collectors, while implementing the literacy programme, had raised 'anti-government' sentiment among the learners through the literacy primers. While ordering that such provocative lessons be expunged from the literacy primers, the Chief Minister has also ordered that government functionaries should dissociate themselves from the agitation. That the state might even resort to repressive measures is becoming a distinct possibility because of the political nature of the agitation.

On the other hand, the women's movement is gradually becoming more militant and has now become politicized because of the support it has received from all the opposition political parties. Given this conflicting scenario, the future direction of the anti-arrack agitation remains uncertain. But despite this uncertainty, there is a hope that 'the women cadres and leaders emerging from this movement will pose serious questions in future. The question that the grassroots women pose to hubands, activists and parties - to the entire civil society - will be radieally different from the ones that the urban middle class women have posed so far" (Ilaiah, 1992).

Nonformal education and Women's empowerment: Perspective on South Pacific praxis

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Introduction

This article is based on the report of a study in the Carribean and the South Pacific presented to ICAE in 1994, by Dr Patricia Ellis and Dr Adele Jones:

'Nonformal education and the empowerment of women: Report of a study in the Caribbean and the South Pacific'.

In most countries in the Asia-Pacific region, many women participate in nonformal education (NFE) programs. These programs are organized by different institutions, NGOs and government departments. Topics offered cover a wide range of fields. While women obviously benefit in some way from these programs, there has been little research conducted to show whether NFE programs are actually helping women better understand themselves, their situation or position as women in these societies. There is also little evidence to show if, or how, these programs are empowering the participants to question and challenge discriminatory practices, to take control of their lives or to take action to change their situation.

This paper discusses findings on the South Pacific section of a research project funded by the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE) which examined the extent to which NFE programs for women in the Carribean and the South Pacific (all small island countries), contributed to the empowerment of those who participate in them. The project was designed to provide an opportunity for a small number of women from eight countries in these two regions (one hundred in total in the South Pacific) to examine and reflect on their experience of participating in NFE programs. The research was also seen as a way to motivate women to take some action to transform their lives and situation

and to generate empirical data which could be used to reorient and improve this whole area of education so that it might be more effective in helping women challenge the structures operating to keep them on the periphery of socio-political decision making.

Research, education and empowerment

As the ICAE research report highlighted, social research as an activity is undertaken to find out more about reality and can be seen as an integral part of education. Through it, new knowledge and perspectives are generated, while more is found out about people, social reality and factors determining social conditions. While research and education are often resistant to change and reinforce the status quo, they can also become tools for empowering people if they promote skills in critical thinking and political analysis and help develop self-confidence and skills to mobilize and plan and organize for change. Certainly, with increased consciousness, better understanding, new skills and improved self-confidence, people are not only better equipped but are more prepared to take action and initiate and manage change.

However, many providers of NFE programs fail to realize or recognize the potential NFE has to empower learners and to facilitate change. While agencies see NFE as a vehicle for transmitting knowledge and skills which will lead to some attitudinal or behavioural change, NFE programs need not necessarily help learners develop critical thinking and the social analysis skills necessary to confront issues such as gender inequality and discrimination of women on a macro scale.

Traditional NFE programs for women concentrate on equipping women with skills which enable them to perform their reproductive rather than productive roles. Even those programs which have focused on skills training and income-generating projects, have often come to naught because the skills taught have little market value and have taught little in other areas critical to the success of economic enterprises, e.g., market research and marketing, small business management, costing, pricing and accounting procedures. As a result, programs and projects have ultimately led to disappointment and frustration, and have continued to marginalize women kept outside of the mainstream of the formal sectors of the economy. Thus, it could be argued, education and training, including NFE programs, may be tools of disempowerment, with women's participation in them actually increasing their sense of powerlessness.

A more recent orientation in NFE programs, and one with which ASPBAE members will be familiar, has been the focus on increasing women's awareness and understanding of the factors responsible for their oppression and positions and disadvantage. There has been an increase in the number of programs training women in the non-traditional skill areas of science, trade and technology, problem-solving, planning and management, in critical thinking and political analysis, and in networking, lobbying, negotiating and strategizing.

Methods too, are used to facilitate learning and empowerment. As women participate together in NFE and training activities where they learn how to articulate their experience of oppression and to analyze factors such as patriarchal ideology, existing societal structrues, system and arrangements responsbile for women's condition in society, they can be empowered to act collectively to transform their lives and change their situation.

The research design

The research and workshop which formed the basis of this project included two hundred women across four Caribbean countries (Barbados, Grenada, St Lucia and St Vincent) and four South Pacific countries (Fiji, Kiribati, Niue and Tonga). For the purpose of this study, however, only the findings from South Pacific countries will be discussed.

In each country four in-country workshops were selected to represent offerings from the government department of women, the national women's organization, one NGO and the University of the South Pacific (USP) Extension Centre. In total, sixteen agencies and almost one hundred women (sixteen facilitators and eighty participants in NFE programs) participated in the project.

Data was collected through questionnaires (to agencies and participants from identified earlier workshops), interviews (with facilitators of the

identified workshops), and from the research workshops held as part of this study. In addition, audio and video tapes were made in the Pacific to help facilitate the information dissemination at the conclusion of the project.

The research context

To a limited extent, the Carribean and South Pacific regions share similar characteristics. They are multi island countries whose economies are largely based on agriculture and tourism, with fishing in the Soutn Pacific and a growing though fragile garment industry in Fiji. The countries represented in this study generally have few natural resources and are all aware of their fragile environmental situation. Fiji, with a population of three quarters of a million is the largest country represented in the south Pacific part of the study and has 330 islands. The sea area of Kiribati covers 3.55 million square kilometres and is one of the most important fishing areas in the Pacific. Tonga consists of about 150 islands, 36 of which are inhabited, while Niue, the largest coral island in the Pacific and the only island country of these four South Pacific countries, has a population of a little more than two thousand on the island.

As mentioned earlier, in all four South Pacific countries, NFE courses offered by the government department of women, national women's organizations, NGOs and the USP Extension Centres are represented in the study. Agencies participating in this study are represented below.

SOUTH PACIFIC

Fiji

- Ministry of Youth Employment and Sports (selected for its NFE female program)
- National Council of Women Federation
- Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)
- USP Centre

Kiribati

- Ministry of Health, Family Planning and Social Welfare (responsible for women's programs)
- Aia Maea Ainen Kiribati (AMAK) National Women's Association of Kiribati
- Itoiningaina Catholic Women's Training Centre
- USP Centre

Niue

- Department of Community Affairs (Women's desk)
- Niue Council of Women
- Niue Youth Council
- USP Centre

Tonga

- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (Women's Division)
- Fefine'i Fonua Country Women's Association
- CHADU (Cancer, Heart Disease, Asthma, Diabetes, Ulcers)
- USP Centre

In three of the South Pacific countries, it will be noted, that there is not a specific government department of women (except in Fiji) though women's issues fall under other departments.

Methods and programs selected for this study

In the South Pacific, USP Centre women staff assisted with the selection of programs to be invited to join the study. Programs represented had been conducted over the two year period prior to the research.

Overall, the program selected by each South Pacific agency in this study represented a broad field included in the topics listed below:

- leadership training, counselling
- women and work, resource identification and use
- vocational and non-traditional skills
- small business management
- women's health, women and AIDS
- parent education, education for teenage mothers
- the economy, the environment, disaster preparedness
- gender and development, gender analysis, gender planning
- traditional medicine

Outcomes of the workshop ranged from broad skills such as project development from the

evnironment workshop, to those which were quite specific. Skills tended to differ from workshop to workshop and within regions. In terms of time, NFE programs included courses (between two years to ten weeks), workshops (one to fourteen days) and training sessions of several hours.

Research workshop and findings

The full report on this project (available from the authors) discusses in detail, the providers, facilitators and participants from the NFE workshop. For present purposes the findings have been summarised and have concentrated more on the overall views of the eighty participants from the four South Pacific countries.

The 'research' workshops held in each of the countries provided an opportunity for women to reflect on and analyze their experiences of partiicipating in NFE programs. In addition, participation in these workshops enabled women to be more aware of other options, to be aware that they had choices and of the need for NFE/training programs to address issues of women's continuing position of disadvantage and of unequal gender relations.

The South Pacific workshop focused on the 'vision' women had for themselves in the early twenty-first century. Concrete suggestions from the South Pacific included:

- more women in positions of leadership and management positions, particularly in local educational institutions
- women's involvement in politics was stressed in three workshops
- greater opportunities for women to be involved in formal and nonformal education
- gender training for men and awareness raising amongst men and women on issues such as domestic violence
- more women to be trained in health areas and as doctors
- effective and increased public education in the areas of family planning and health
- equal access to employment opportunities
- improved household technology for women in rural areas and villages

Though not couched in such terms, many of these 'vision' statements have implications for NFE and formal education planning in the South Pacific.

Other findings from the research included profiles of the facilitators, recruitment practices, sponsoring institutions' motivation for selecting particular workshops. This paper, however, focuses mainly on what the participants felt they had gained from the workshops. Certainly judging whether women had been empowered or not is a more difficult task depending somewhat on the values and critical consciousness of the researchers themselves.

Benefits from participating in the NFE workshops

Across both regions in this study, women said that they had benefitted from participating in the various programs. They have often obtained new information, acquired new skills, visited new places, shared experiences with other women and became more aware of the reason for women's disadvantaged position in society. Some said they learnt how to negotiate in disagreements and many said that they had gained self confidence, e.g., 'a more open attitude, positive thinking, feeling confident and no longer apologetic'.

Some women reported little change in their attitudes as a result of NFE programs. In two South Pacific countries, women expressed disappointment regarding the lack of follow-up activities or action decided upon at the earlier workshop. Women were also more willing to mix with others and had developed a greater desire to participate and see others participate. Likewise, they were more outspoken and careful of how they voted on the election day which took place sometime after one of the courses.

Changes in capability included confident management, being able to 'think through' decisions, to count costs and budget carefully. Women discovered where to get help when necessary, how to develop business plans, and keep good records and accounts. In both regions, women spoke about being able to motivate other women. In terms of awareness raising, responses varied across regions and between countries.

In the South Pacific, responses relating to gender awareness focused on traditional attitudes associating women's role closely with the home and family. However, some comments indicated a sense of empowerment, with South Pacific comments including:

- 'a woman with energy and a mind for business can go ahead and pursue it'
- 'it encouraged me to participate in community activities'
- 'if a young woman has someting constructive to say and constructive activities to do she should feel free to do it'
- 'I am able to push women out and urge them to branch out in fulfilling their dreams'
- 'I will do my best to work with women, help and encourage women to try their best so that men can know that we women can do anything'
- 'men and women should work hand in hand because both have a role to play which should be understood in women's development'
- 'we should be aware of the problems associated with women's development and the techniques to tackle them'.

In Fiji, facilitators spoke of the stark difference between the role of men and women in various parts of the country. However, women in the Fiji sample believed that men were more prepared to listen to women in meetings. In Kiribati, the situation was quite different and women were adamant that women had little, if any, voice to speak in the *maneaba* (the traditional meeting house) where the *unimane* (elders) and men were the only ones to be involved in decision making. While the women in all four South Pacific countries said things were changing, the Kiribati women spoke most strongly in terms of the need for political change.

Conclusion

This study has shown that both government agencies and NGOs in Fiji, Kiribati, Niue and Tonga provide opportunities for women to participate in a variety of education and training programs. While these programs are attempting to meet women's educational, social, economic and political needs, not all of them are consciously being used as a strategy to empower women. In spite of this, the benefits from the programs investigated in this study seemed to increase women's awareness of their situation and, to some extent, gave them a better understanding of the factors responsible for this. The programs improved self confidence and provided new skills, promoted a desire for change, greater ability to articulate the desired change and willingness to act to bring about the change.

However, many of these programs did contribute to the personal empowerment and to a lesser extent, the political empowerment of the women who participated and appear to have been successful in helping women achieve some degree of economic empowerment. At the same time, there seemed to be a tendency to offer NFE programs as 'isolated events' and for women to continue to participate in them without any serious attempt to follow-up or evaluate the effect or impact on their lives or situation. A number of women involved in this study indicated that programs did not meet their expectations but it appears that providers were unaware of this failure of programs. Thus, while it is evident that mnay women do see their participation in NFE as necessary and beneficial, the inability of providers and participants to clearly identify and articulate the way in which the programs have contributed to change in women's situation not only personally but at the community and social levels is one issue which must be addressed if NFE for women is to become a tool for empowerment.

Education work among urban poor women: facing its practical challenges

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I. Realizing a vision: digging deeper roots among urban poor women

Samahan ng Malayang Kababaihang Nagkakaisa (SAMAKANA), A national federation of urban poor women's organizations was established in September, 1984. It was the height of the anti-dictatorship movement in the country. SAMAKANA's organizing work revolved around this. Until Februray 1986, most of our organizational, activities were centered on protest actions and awareness-raising regarding the conditions of the country under a dictator.

After 1986, however, SAMAKANA's membership substantially decreased and generally became inactive, broughf largely by a wait-and-see attitude regarding significant changes the new government under Cory Aquino will bring.

By 1988 to early 1989, the organizational situation worsened. Cynicism became prevalent, an outcome of the extreme frustrations felt by the membership who had high expectations of the new government. Instead of hoped-for development programs and attention, the urban poor experienced military harassment. There were no changes in the economic policies pursued by Marcos; the economic crisis worsened for the poor.

The few members who remained steadfast to the necessity of organized actions for effecting change rallied together and strived to re-invigorate the whole organization. Hence, our national congress in 1987 reiterated the need to focus its efforts on urban poor women's concerns and its approaches not only on advocacy work but also on skills development and the initiation of appropriate development projects at the community level.

Recently, we are in the process of consolidating our organizational strength at different levels. But still, we reiterated the need to prioritize our organizing work among urban poor women. After years of hard work in

revitalizing our organization, with confidence, we are slowly growing into a women's organization that comprehensively works for the rights and welfare of women in urban poor communities.

Currently, SAMAKANA has a total membership of 2,654 covering 85 communities in urban centers nationwide. Eighteen (18) communities are found in Metro Manila. Provincial affiliates and chapters include women's organizations in Cebu City, Iloilo City, Bacolod City, Tacloban City, Zamboanga City, Dipolog City and Davao City.

Fundamental in realizing our vision is the analysis that women can only be genuinely liberated if the structures that maintain, perpetuate and/or aggravate the oppression and exploitation of women are eradicated.

Hence, while we collectively strive to address practical gender needs in the community level, there is also a conscious effort to study how these manifestations are integrated with the basic problems that plague society's structures.

While meaningful reforms are welcome and are being fought for at various levels, it is crucial to arm our basic members with the tools to critically analyze their situation. We still prioritize organizing grassroots women where their collective actions/responses are anchored on a common vision and aspirations of the Filipino people in general and as women in particular.

It is in this light where we see education work as a crucial component of our over-all work. Where education becomes a tool for urban poor women in comprehending their situation; identifying courses of action to undertake; and enabling them to directly participate in liberating themselves as women in the context of our society's economic and socio-political realities.

II. Education work among women fighting for survival

"Kapit sa patalim" (lit. *grasping the edge of the knife*) as the saying goes, exemplifies an ordinary urban porr woman's life.

Back-breaking menial jobs. Scavenging. Hawking in unfriendly streets and marketplaces. Providing sexual favors for small amounts of cash or food. For urban poor women seeking money for the day's food, there is simply no rule. Gender discrimination in jobs; low literacy and skill levels and other factors push them further into oblivion.

And within the forbidden corners of what they call home, they are living victims of domestic violence, form of which varies from physical, mental to psychological. Since unemployment is a common problem among the urban poor and it is the women who are able to take on the task of feeding the family through odd jobs, the occurence of physical violence is becoming prevalent. Beating women and children is a common aftermath in such cases where it revolves around the concept and practice of restoring male centeredness of power in their homes.

From our end, we conduct education among urban porr women to:

a. complement our basic strategies especially organizing work;

b. promote and/or build confidence among women to individually and collectively address their practical problems at different levels;

c. arm women with tools to be able to analyze, criticize and undertake courses of action for their own benefit.

As a matter of principle, our starting point in any educational undertaking is giving due emphasis on reliance on urban poor women's knowledge and capability. This general principle qualifies if not determines our approaches, methodologies, design and conduct of our educational activities among urban poor women.

To reiterate, organizing will be a basic strategy which SAMAKANA must undertake for a long time. In this regard, education work should then be in support of organizing work. Where educational sessions lead to a clear understanding of issues towards concrete actions against oppressive policies, programs and practices. It should also lead women in defining in their own terms alternative responses and courses of action.

In this manner, we are concretizing together with

them the promotion of self-confidence and assertion to free themselves from basic structural inequities and cultural bonds perpetuating women's oppression and exploitation.

Based on our exiences, education work among urban poor women can be classified into the following categories:

a. Nationalist Feminist Educational Courses which aim to enable women to have a critical understanding of their experiences and give them the impetus to struggle against the different sources of oppression and exploitation that they have to contend with;

b. Organizational Courses which aim to further develop their capability to manage their organization and launch organized responses to issues at different levels;

c. Specific Skills Training Courses which aim to enhance their capability in developing programs specific to welfare and needs for social services.

III. Insights: Women's Orientation Seminar as a basic requirement to urban poor women's feminist awareness-raising

"Before, I could not dare assert even my views to my husband, but after I learned of my rights as a woman, I now have the confidence to so".

"It was only after I participated in a study regarding the women's situation and women's rights that I was able to look straight to a person when talking; I felt my worth as a woman and as a human being."

"Before, I used to be a punching bag of my husband, but after I realized that discrimination and oppression of women is not a natural thing, I became more decisive in my views and assertive to do what is right. This facilitated the changes in my husband's and actuations towards me as his wife".

These comments reflect the usual responses of women when asked about the effects of the sessions on women's orientation. Rehabilitation of one's self-worth, assertiveness, and confidence-building are the common outcome to participants of this seminar-workshop.

This course which normally lasts for two-and-a-half days is the most favored among the different SAMAKANA courses. This is a basic requisite to further studies since this course facilitates elemental understanding of the different forms and levels of oppression women experience; of the perpetrators of these oppressions; and the alternative courses of action women may undertake. Completion of this course normally leads the participant to a firm realization that destiny lies in their own hands.

Although this is the most welcome course, convincing women to attend it is not easy. Attendance would mean a half-day's loss of income, delay in the household chores or possible husband's ire. So, preliminary discussions have to be done in order to make urban poor women see its importance and stock enough nerve in attending workshop sessions. They

have to realize it for their own interest.

Simple announcement would never suffice to encourage participation. House-to-house invitation is the most effective. This is usually done by the organizer in areas where a chapter is not yet established. Wit a newly formed chapter, the task is shouldered by both the organizer and the concerned local leaders. For the more advanced chapters, ordinary members convince each other to attend the educational activities.

Participative methods in facilitation encourage women to speak out their practical experiences. This is frequently done through role-playing. From their own experiences, we cull concrete examples of women's oppression; difficulties and responses on the other hand need to be examined.

Drawing out their experiences is only a first step of the whole process. Next is culling out of the different biases women themselves have internalized. The facilitator must be adept in probing and/or asking further questions so that they may be guided in differentiating distoritions from the truth and the correct from the incorrect.

Generally speaking, discussion sessions are successful in drawing out women's participation and in correcting anti-women prejudices. On one hand, there are other specific problems that affect participant's concentration and/or full participation. These are the following:

a. Lack of available venue where they could have the needed privacy. In many communities, discussions are usually held in any available vacant space. These areas are ordinarily teeming with teenagers and children playing or hovering around. These distractions hamper effective assimilation of the inputs.

Moreover, not a few are hesitant in sharing their experiences and voicing out their opinions knowing that outsiders are around. At this point, role-playing serves its best function. This enables women to express in group their experiences without necessarily accepting publicly who the concerned people are. This saves them from feelings of embarassment and calms their fear of possible reprisals from husbands irked by their wives' openness.

b. Another problem is the disturbance caused by the participants' children. This is another reality in doing education work among urban poor women. To cope up, SAMAKANA tries to organize childcare assistance during workshop sessions. However, absence of skills of certain volunteers delimits its effectivity. This difficulty is worse in areas where we are still in the process of instituting childcare assistance.

c. Although the participative method of discussion eases the understanding of different concepts, there is still a need on our end to develop visuals to complement our instructional materials. This is true especially on summary portions.

d. The need to develop creative methodologies which are appealing to the participants especially on specific women's issues like wife abuse and sexual violence. Our basic predicament on such issues is the level of readiness on the part of the victim to share her story.

While we encourage them to speak out, we are conscious to strike a balance between the necessity and its practical implications when she gets home. We don't want any member to be subjected again to physical abuse just because she told us her story.

The whole process of educating urban poor women is a very complex one given her economic and socio-political status in our society. Here lies the challenge for us, women of SAMAKANA, where we strive to give meaning to a more often than not abused term, empowerment.

IV. Empowerment: Rhetorics and realities among women in urban poor communities

Empowerment is a term used and abused by different groups and institutions of different political and ideological backgrounds. What is common in the usage is it refers to a specific group or sector where a semblance of acquiring, sharing or actual seizure of power is taking place. What qualifies the degree or levels of empowerment achieved is determined by the local exisiting conditions defined single-handedly or processed with their respective constituents.

Is genuine empowerment taking place in a situation where, through lobbying and other forms of action, we were able to push a local government agency to provide relocation for urban poor women and their families?

Boldly we state: NO! That situation and other similar ones in the context of our socio-economic realities are the pitfalls of cooptation which we must be very critical of in the course of undertaking solid organizing work among urban poor women.

As an approach in educating our constituents why we must not rest our laurels in situations where a specific demand was granted is the conscious effort to link these demands to the broader context of the basic structural problems of our society.

By so doing, while we initiate active mass participation for an issue at different levels, we are able to arm them with knowledge that their case is not an isolated one from thousands of urban poor dwellers who are also fighting for basic demands other than demolition.

Hence, our general guiding principle can be stated as follows: "Empowerment of women is devoid of meaning if we are not able to link our small victories to the basic structural problems we as women have a large stake to participate in".

Moreso, attainment of empowerment must be congruent to the organizational and political capacity of the organization but not isolated from the surging people's movement and women's movement in particular.

We cannot appreciate in a larger context the meaning of being able to relocate members of our chapters because we know that more communities are to be demolished. Aside from that, when they come to the relocation site, claiming their right to that elusive piece of land is another battle.

Based on our practical experiences, the question of who controls power and where to direct our concerted efforts to alleviate urban poor women's situation leads us to the increasing role of the state or governments in power in the rise of sexual violence and other forms of exploitation and oppression of women. It is by and large a question of intent and framework on the part of the state.

Hence, the state must be viewed in its entirety. For us, it is not a machinery of individuals who may or may not be sympathetic to our cause. The state is but an instrument and/or a machinery controlled by a few who are serving the interest of the ruling elite. So in concrete terms, their programs and policies are not sensitive to our needs as a people and as women in particular.

For us in SAMAKANA, clarifying the above-mentioned concepts is of key importance in our overall strategies. We do not want our mass members in a limbo. In the process, we do stress the need for building solid strength in the local level. This solid organized force guarantees the realization of our vision as a people and as women.

Popular Education for Women's Empowerment

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The view that education is a way out of oppressive conditions dates back to the action of the women of Malolos who petitioned the Spanish colonial authorities to set up an evening school for women. The act was so audacious for its time that Jose Rizal was moved to write to the women expressing his admiration for their action. He also immortalized the incident by including it in his novel Noli Me Tangere. However, the action in the novel became a male students' action, reflecting perhaps Rizal's resistance to incipient feminism in Philippine colonial society.

Similarly, education remains a major component of the contemporary Filipino women's struggle against oppressive conditions and for national, social and personal liberation. One major difference, however, is that our education efforts have historically been part of a broader social movement for radical structural change which considers education, organization and mobilization as an integrated process. Furthermore our efforts do not depend on the magnanimity of the powers that be. On the contrary, we have embarked on our education activities in spite of obstacles placed in our way.

Since we consider our efforts an important and necessary contribution to the transformation of society and existing social relations, we have prioritized documentation and the assessment of our experiences as part of our immediate work. This report on popular education and women's

empowerment in the Philippines is a contribution toward ongoing efforts to synthesize our experiences in the field.

Based on annual reports, evaluation and other written materials, this report will deal with a) historical background, b) description of the educational program, c) analysis, d) evaluation, and e) problems and constraints.

HISTORY

When the Center for Women's Resources (CWR) was established in 1982, the group adopted education as one of its thrusts, along with documentation and support to organizing work for women. Education at that time took the form of discussion groups, public fora and workshops. Much of the work then focused on the need to raise women's issues, especially in relation to the political conditions. Education was found to be a factor that facilitated organizing.

Two years later, partly because of such education efforts (side by side with the formation and the conjuncture of different political blocs and individual women coming together in protest of the Marcos dictatorship), GABRIELA, a national coalition of women, was formed. While GABRIELA's orientation has changed through the years, the view that education plays a crucial role, especially in reaching out to the women of the basic sectors, has remained. But given the changing times and changing needs of the women, as well as the organizations', the kind of education work that the Center has embarked on has likewise changed.

For instance, one-time fora became insufficient to fill the need for a more comprehensive understanding of women's conditions. Although discussion groups and workshops on single issues remained necessary, it became equally important to look at the broader picture and overall situation of women. At the start, the women's groups were already conscious of the need to integrate a gender perspective into the analysis and handling of national and class issues (e.g., protests against the bases and the nuclear plant). At the same time, there was growing realization of the need to understand and disseminate a framework that would put the women's issues at the same level of importance but integrated into the analysis of the basic problems of Philippine society.

It is in this context that CWR developed one of its major educational work, the women's orientation module also popularly known in its written form as "How Do We Liberate Ourselves: Understanding Our Oppression, Working For Emancipation".

The basic women's orientation was initially intended to be given in three days, but because of the difficulty of women workers and urbanpoor women to find three consecutive days for such an orientation, a one-day module was developed. This was patterned after the framework of the original module. Another innovation was the scheduling of the women's orientation on a staggered basis.

The Basic Women's Orientation

Written in 1986, the women's orientation consists of four modules:

1. Awareness of the Body and the Self of a Woman;
2. Women in Philippine Society
3. Historical Development of Women's Oppression and Discrimination in the Philippines and the Primary Targets of Women's Organized Action: the Four Binds; and
4. Actions and Projections of Women for Liberation.

Module 1 contains three topics: a) Awareness of the body and women's sexualiy; b) Awareness of ourselves as Women and the Value of Women's Work; and c) Women and the Socialization Process.

Module 2 is divided into two: first, Women and Laws; and second, The Condition of Women from the Different Sectors.

Module 3 consists of a discussion on the position of women during the pre-colonial times, and Spanish and American colonization

as well as their role in the resistance movement. Also included in this section is a discussion of the relationship of the basic problems of Philippine society with the women's question.

Module 4, which tackles the actions and projections available to women groups, is explained in the context of on the need for a strong and progressive feminist movement in the Philippines.

From the Basic Women's Orientation, other sectoral women's orientation were formulated. Hence, peasant women, urban poor women, women workers and indigenous women came up with their own modules that deepen the discussion of the situation of the women in the particular sector and the corresponding strategies. The women's centers in the different regions, for example the women in Davao, also developed a particular version of the women's orientation which integrated their knowledge of the parituclar conditions of women in Mindanao.

Analysis

The modules can stand independent of each other. However, there was a logic for their order. In contrast to most of the political education modules/courses, the women's orientation evolved from the experiences of women as women. Using the feminist slogan "personal is political" as the underlying principle, the women talk about their life stories. Here they are given the opportunity to reflect on their lives as women and its development through time. This take-off from women's lives affirms the importance of their lives, a contrast to their non-valuation in the larger society. Another important component of the first module is the discussion of women's understanding of their bodies and sexuality. Through games and the creation of a space that allows for openness and trust, women relate their views of their own bodies and how this are shared by women and men in society. Aside from pointing out that this is in itself a "political" and therefore important discussion, the sharing that ensues provides an opportunity for women to know more about themselves and their bodies. While personal experiences are important and therefore should be given space, these also must be related to broader society.

For example, a discussion on the socialization process of girls and women follows after the sharing of the women's lives to show the relationship of women's biography to social structures and mechanisms and how these shape the views and actions of women. As CWR refused to stay at the level of individual women experiences, it also sought to link the lives of the participants to other women in the country, paving the way for a discussion of the conditions of women from the different sectors. Here it was possible to draw the similarities of women from all sectors, as well as to discern the differences, much of which were the result of class differences and one's location in the production sphere.

As all of these experiences, whether at the personal or societal, are shaped by a particular history, the third module allows women to see this connection. A discussion of history points out that women's oppression is not a modern-day phenomenon but rooted in our history, and therefore will take time to resolve. In a way, this module has the underlying message of "know your past to understand your present".

Mainstreaming Gender into Mixed Organizations

A more recent development initiated in the early '90s is the training on gender sensitivity or gender-orientation workshop. This type of training is principally geared to non women-specific development organizations and is aimed at raising awareness on the specificity of women's oppression, and on the differential impact of development and political work on both men and women. The individual's realization and appreciation of the need to integrate gender into the framework of the organization's programs and institutional policies are manifested in the usual output of the training - the formulation of policies and operational measures on gender.

Methods

The methods for facilitation of the different training modules are basically similar to the

ones used for the Basic Women's Orientation. The starting point is experiential, with attention paid to the participants' experiences and their relation to the concepts to be introduced during the training. Definitely the methods have gone beyond the original "basa-talakay" (*lit.*read and discuss)of the pioneering years of the progressive movement, but they have retained the principles that underline the initial efforts: the need to relate theory to the concrete situation of the participants; a process of learning where the facilitator learns from the participants, the participants learn from the facilitator, and everyone learns from each other.

For the women's groups, the innovation has been in underscoring that "the personal is political" and in bringing in personal issues such as sexuality and violence against women as social issues.

The use of visual aids use has also evolved through the years. While drawings and illustrations made on the spot by the facilitator and the participants remain regular trademarks of our trainings (hence the high premium for Manila paper, old newspapers, crayons and markers, masking tape and scissors), we have begun to develop more permanent teaching aids. The TBK or the Tulong Biswal Pang-Kababaihan is a set of silk-screened illustrations on "*katsa*" (cheesecloth) which can be used (as a set or as individual pieces) for the Basic Women's Orientation, for Gender Orientation Workshops and other trainings. As many of the trainings are held in poor urban and rural communities, this type of teaching aid, which does not require electricity or expensive audio-visual equipment, is most appropriate. We have also developed slides to illustrate the history of women's oppression and struggles, and the present situation of Filipino women.

The use of women's poems and stories has also been integrated in a training as more women, coming from the grassroots organizations, have begun to write about their ideas and aspirations.

Evaluation

We are evaluating the impact of our educational work. But the feedback gathered immediately after each training provides initial information on the effects of the training on the participants.

The women's orientation sessions are enlightening, an eye opener for majority of both women and men participants. It helped them analyze women's issues and problems and know their inner selves better. Skills training, on the other hand, taps on their potential, and strengthens their self-confidence and capabilities in handling lines of work.

After every session, participants are asked to write or state their insights and reflections on the previous session. The following are some examples of participants insights:

From Bicol: "The education session is an eye opener. You know, this is funny, but it is

only now that I realize that not all women activists are feminists and that being an activists is not a guarantee that one is an advocate of equal gender relations."

From KMK, Negros chapter: "This women's session is different from other education sessions. Unlike other seminars, here we talk about our lives as women, as mothers, as wives, the so-called personal. It will push you to examine yourself and help you understand why women are in a subordinate position, and why they are oppressed and exploited. I hope this seminar will also be given to the men or husbands from them to understand our feelings and hardships."

From a peasant woman from Mindoro Occidental: "Since I was a child I used to do all the so-called women's work. Since I got married I have done all the household chores, until now that I already have grown-up children. I remember telling my daughter that since she is a girl she should know how to clean the house well, know how to cook delicious food and all that, but I did not say the same things to my son. [This differentiation] is what I saw my mother do. All the while, I thought it was natural. After going through the socialization process session, I realized it is wrong and saw how different socialization agents shape us to think and act the way we do. I will not let my children inherit all these."

From a peasant organizer: "I have been a full time organizer for almost ten years, but it is only now that I realize the importance of women organizing and what it can do to help women. As an organizer, I tend to veer away from quarrels of couples, thinking that these are problematic. Now I realize that the origin of most of women's problems is the home. Besides, a number of basic rights are not enjoyed by women because they are not priority, be it in the family, community or government policy. True enough, you cannot isolate the personal from the political".

From an urban poor woman: "I thought it my duty to obey when my husband wants to use me even though I was tired from washing clothes the whole day. I am surprised that we women also have rights which include the right to say no if we are tired and not in the mood to have sex with our husbands. So we have to fight for that right."

From woman worker: "Even though we already have a union in the factory, we still and should have a women's organization or women's committee. With this, we will have a machinery that will fight and lobby for our rights and concern."

From men participants: From a development worker: "Sessions like this are good. They really help me in analyzing the situation and day-to-day life of women. Now I understand why it is said that women are oppressed and exploited."

From an NGO education staff: "Sessions like this should be provided to men. If they also go through the same process I did, they will also realize why women are oppressed. I now understand why my wife is at times angry over the fact that I am always out of the house doing political work while she works to earn a living and at the same time does all the household chores. Though I sometimes help her, I have a lot to make up for."

From a fisherfolk mass leader: "Before, I was annoyed by women's organizing and women's campaigns. I thought to myself that these are divisive and in effect, women are prolonging the struggle. But now I realize that women suffer a kind of oppression that men of the same class don't."

From a staff member of a mass political organization: "I am guilty over the realization that I was unconsciously oppressing my mother during those times that I got mad because the shirt I wanted to wear was still in the hamper even though I knew she does the household chores all by herself. Never mind, it's not late yet."

These testimonies reflect the immediate impact of women's education work at the individual level. At a broader level, as these conclusions are still to be validated by an ongoing impact study, our preliminary conclusions on the effects of our education/

training work are as follows:

1) Gave the issues of women's oppression a concrete dimension and sharper focus in the agenda for national and social transformation and progressive (nationalist and democratic) feminism as an alternative;

2) Introduced to women the need to be an integral part of the movement for national and social change, and deepened their understanding of why unequal gender relations have to be addressed at the same time an unequal national and class relations; and

3) Underscored and highlighted the validity of individual women's experiences and related these to political, economic and cultural structrues.

In particular, the women's movement and women's education work have introduced the issues of sexuality and violence against women as valid political issues.

Problems and Constraints

1) *Constraints on financial resources.* The lack of financial resources has been a barrier in holding more trainings and reproducing copies of the modules and visual aids. This constraint is magnified by the nationwide growth of the women's movement and the need to produce materials in the major local dialects so as to reach more women.

2) *Constraints on human resources.* There is a chronic lack of trainers and facilitators, a lack partly explained by some trainors' option to pursue better livelihood opportunities instead. The problem stresses the need to improve our trainers' training that more trainors can be developed in less time.

3) *Problems of participants.* Time constraints, distance and the husband's opposition are some of the obstacles to a woman's full participation in their session.

4) *Need to develop and implement* a regular monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that training modules and methods are continually improved.

5) *Need to further sharpen the analysis of patriarchy* in the context of a semi-colonial, semi-feudal system and the interrelationship between the class structure and the unequal gender division of labor.

Finally, we would like to quote a participant on a training on global economic policies and Filipino women's migration, as her statement distills the spirit of what popular education and women's empowerment is all about: "There's nothing more challenging to the system than conscientized women who know how to fight."

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